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Principals' Perceptions of the Importance of Classroom Walkthroughs

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The University of Southern Mississippi

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF
CLASSROOM WALKTHROUGHS

by

Shannon Anne McGill

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2011

ABSTRACT

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF
CLASSROOM WALKTHROUGHS

By Shannon Anne McGill

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Education reform has required school administrators to become instructional leaders that ensure teacher effectiveness and academic success for all students. Classroom walkthroughs are one way that instructional leaders can accomplish this task. This study examined the level of importance that principals place on the practice of classroom walkthroughs and on specific elements of classroom walkthroughs; it further explored the relationships among perceptions about classroom walkthroughs and student achievement, school performance levels (AYP), and socio-economic status (SES) of the school.

This was a quantitative study that utilized survey methodology, archival data and correlational analyses to identify the relationships among principals' perceptions of the importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs and school socio-economic status, school performance level and student achievement. Participants were identified through a convenience sample of elementary school principals from three metro-area school districts in a Southeastern state that included both metropolitan and suburban communities. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Pearson product-moment correlation and hierarchal multiple regression. SSPS was used to determine the statistical relationships among the variables.

The study revealed that principals value the practices associated with classroom walkthroughs. Significant relationships were not identified among the importance principals place on classroom walkthrough design, SES, AYP or student achievement, or among the relative importance principals place on classroom walkthroughs and SES or AYP. This study identified a significant relationship between the perceived importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to administrative duties of building student, family and community relations and student achievement.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I introduces the study and familiarizes the reader with relevant background information. A theoretical framework of the study is presented and a statement of the problem and purpose for the study are provided. The research questions, delimitations, and assumptions of the study are addressed in this chapter. Definitions of terms related to the study are given to assist the reader, and the chapter concludes with a summary of key points.

Over the last two decades, education reform has led to increased accountability for student achievement and the development of educational standards requiring school systems and administrators to examine relationships between achievement and teacher effectiveness. This increased accountability requires that schools describe success in terms of the accomplishments of individual students, regardless of disabilities, race, gender, ethnicity or income levels. With the implementation of Race to the Top, a competitive federal grant program instituted by the Obama administration, many states are considering ways to take student achievement data into account when evaluating teacher performance. School administrators are charged with the enormous task of ensuring teacher effectiveness while increasing student achievement. This task requires that principals become instructional leaders and find ways to effectively blend these elements together as they move their schools forward. Aligning classroom walkthrough observations and subsequent feedback, teacher evaluations, and professional development is one way instructional leaders can accomplish this goal. This study examined the level of importance that principals place on the practice of classroom walkthroughs and on specific elements of the classroom walkthrough design; it further explored the

relationships among perceptions about classroom walkthroughs and student achievement, school performance levels, and socio-economic status of the school.

The nationwide trend of accountability and standards began in 1989 with the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which created a framework for identifying academic standards, measuring student progress and providing the support necessary for students to achieve (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). Goals 2000 supported the efforts of states in developing their own rigorous standards for learning as well as state and district-wide efforts in school improvement and increased achievement. States were allocated funding on a competitive basis to support reform initiatives such as development of content standards, alignment of instruction to state standards, curriculum development, professional learning and increased parent involvement. Goals 2000 included the following goals: a) by 2000, all children will start school ready to learn; b) at least 90% will graduate from high school; c) all will demonstrate competency over challenging subject matter in English, math, science, foreign languages, civics, economics, the arts, history and geography; d) the United States will be first in the world in math and science; e) all adults will be literate; f) no school will have drugs, violence, firearms or alcohol; and g) teachers will have needed skills; and all schools will have parent involvement. The goals set forth in Goals 2000 were lofty and in many cases unattainable due to lack of resources or amount of time given to attain them. Though the reform effort was considered a failure by many, lessons were learned that have been applied in subsequent reform efforts (Rothstein, 1999).

In 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was enacted and holds schools accountable for ensuring that all students, including those in special education and

English language learning programs, make adequate yearly progress (AYP) and perform at a proficient level by the year 2014 (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The NCLB Act requires that states not only establish a set of standards for student learning, but also that schools be held accountable for an ever increasing level of student mastery of the standards. According to Weiner and Hall (2004), “By requiring states to set achievement goals for all groups of students and holding schools and systems accountable for their progress toward meeting those goals, NCLB promotes educators across the country to do what is necessary to ensure that all students achieve at high levels” (p. 17). In light of this legislation, principals began strategizing new ways to improve instruction and increase achievement while facing the challenges of reduced funding and resources. With approximately three years left to attain the goals set forth by the NCLB act, it is already considered by some to be a failure. Criticisms of NCLB include: a) the fact that all students are required to take state-wide achievement tests even if the tests are not an appropriate measures of learning for certain student groups; b) NCLB is focused narrowly on math and reading, leading many schools to drop instruction in other content areas so they can teach to the test and; c) the stringent accountability requirements have spurred reports of district-wide cheating in order to make AYP. Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, reported at a House Committee on Education and the Work Force hearing in March of 2011 that the percentage of schools not meeting yearly targets for proficiency in math and reading could increase from 37 to 82 percent by 2012 (Resnick, 2011). In a trend report from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) it was found that the overall rate of improvement among three age groups and in two subject areas had decreased since before the enactment of NCLB. Further, it was found

that the achievement gap between African Americans and Caucasians and between Hispanics and Caucasians had not shown significant improvement (National Center for Fair and Open Testing, 2009).

Under NCLB, schools not only need to make AYP, which in Georgia is determined by the results of the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT), but students also must be provided with highly qualified teachers. Title II-A of the NCLB Act of 2001 addresses the need for quality teachers and paraprofessionals. NCLB required that all teachers be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year (Georgia School Council Institute, 2008). Georgia defines a highly qualified teacher as “one who holds a bachelor’s degree or higher, has a major in the subject area or has passed the state teacher content assessment, and is assigned to teach his/her major subject(s)” (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2010, p. 6). Title II-A requires that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) create a plan for the implementation of Title II-A requirements. The LEA plans should address a) identified certification deficits, b) out-of-field teaching assignments, c) the fair distribution of teachers, and d) other identified needs. Further, LEAs must notify parents if their child is receiving instruction in a core academic content course from a teacher who is not highly qualified (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2010).

The most recent federal educational reform effort, the Race to the Top program, is designed to provide financial rewards to states that implement innovative educational strategies that successfully increase student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Race to the Top is providing \$4.35 billion dollars in competitive grants to be rewarded to states which:

- Adopt standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
- Build data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;
- Recruit, develop, reward and retain effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and
- Turn around the lowest achieving schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p. 2).

The Race to the Top foci, especially the third, have inspired many states to look at new ways to measure teacher effectiveness. Marzano (2010) explains that “Overall effectiveness in teaching must be defined in terms of the indisputable criterion for success- student learning” (p. 4). Race to the Top describes an effective teacher as one who has the ability to implement instructional strategies to achieve student learning (Schooling, Toth & Marzano, 2010). Two areas of focus relative to teacher effectiveness have emerged. The first involves analyzing the teacher’s impact on student achievement; many suggest a value-added method that focuses on a teacher’s capacity to help students, irrespective of prior achievement, to gain academically. The second focuses on a reformation of the teacher evaluation process.

These trends in education have required school principals to do more than manage schools. They are expected to be instructional leaders and are held accountable for their impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Johnston (2003) describes the role of the principal by stating, “They are expected to coach, mentor and support teachers as they approach the difficult task of promoting high levels of student achievement in a

standards-based, accountability-oriented environment” (p. 1). The movement toward instructional leadership calls for the principal to further their leadership role by becoming familiar with the instructional practices actually occurring in their schools (Kachur, Stout & Edwards, 2010). For this reason, many districts and individual schools have adopted the practice of classroom walkthroughs as a way to monitor instructional practices. Classroom walkthroughs give principals opportunities to gather data on instructional practices allowing them to identify staff development needs and observe the effectiveness of staff development efforts (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, 2004). Marzano (2010) asserts that to be truly effective, “your walkthrough protocol should be completely aligned with your evaluation system; both of those should be completely aligned with your professional development” (p. 1). In this study, the researcher examined relationships among the level of importance principals place on the practice of classroom walkthroughs and on specific walkthrough design elements, student achievement, school performance level and socio-economic levels of the school.

Background of the Study

Elmore (2000) states, “The purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role” (p. 20). Classroom walkthroughs are one practice used by school principals to monitor instructional practices and improve student performance. Classroom walkthroughs, also referred to as “learning walks, instructional walks, focus walks, walk-about, data walks, data snaps, learning visits, quick visits, mini-observations, rounds, instructionally focused walkthroughs, collegial walkthroughs, reflective walkthroughs, classroom walkthroughs and just walkthroughs” can be defined in numerous ways (Kachur et al., 2010, p. 1). Blatt,

Linsley, & Smith (2005) describe classroom walkthroughs as a process that “provides schools with an opportunity to collect real-time data that reveals how professional development is impacting classroom instruction and student learning” (p. 1). Similarly, Cervone and Martinez-Miller (2007) refer to classroom walkthroughs as a method to “drive a cycle of continuous improvement by focusing on the effects of instruction” (p. 1). Classroom walkthroughs can also be described as “a process of visiting classrooms for short time periods of 5-15 minutes, where the instructional program is observed, feedback is provided to teachers, students talk about what they are doing, and data is gathered to inform curricular decisions” (Walker, 2005, p. 1). Downey et al., (2004) explains that classroom walkthroughs are frequent visits conducted by administrators to learn more about the teacher’s curricular and instructional decision making approach. Though slightly different, these definitions of classroom walkthroughs suggest that they are brief, informal classroom visits conducted for the purpose of supervising instruction and gathering data to serve as a foundation for subsequent teacher feedback intended to improve instruction.

Classrooms walkthroughs can be implemented in a variety of ways. According to Kachur et al., (2010) several formal models of classroom walkthroughs exist. Several examples of walkthrough models include:

- Data in a Day (DIAD);
- Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through (CWT) with Reflection;
- Look 2 Learning (L2L) formerly SMART Walk;
- The Learning Walk® Routine; and
- Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI) Process.

The classroom walkthrough model grew from a management style developed in the 1970's by the executives at Hewlett Packard; they referred to the process as Management by Wandering Around (MBWA). The premise of this practice is that effective managers do not sequester themselves in their offices but frequently visit the places where the real work of their organization is being done. The overall purpose of these informal visits is for leaders to listen to complaints and suggestions from employees, collect data on effectiveness, and stay knowledgeable about what is happening in their company.

Tony Alvarado and deputy superintendent Elaine Fink in Community School District 2 of the New York school system were among the first educators to apply the MBWA concept to schools in the 1980s. They viewed principals as listeners and saw the importance of them being tuned in to instruction (Kachur et al., 2010). Under their direction, classroom walkthroughs became routine for principals, teachers and central office leaders. The classroom walkthrough was considered the district's primary accountability strategy. The success of Community School District 2 in the utilization of the classroom walkthrough led to the development of several classroom walkthrough models based on MBWA. In 1990, Larry Frase and Robert Hetzel published the book, *School Management by Wandering Around*, which was a guide to applying the MBWA concept to education. The book was republished in 2002 due to continued popularity. Schlechty (2008), although not in favor of applying business management practices to education, notes what he perceives to be a valuable connection between the business world and educational leadership, "One of the lessons business experience suggests is that district wide transformation requires leaders who have a clear vision of the systems

they want to create and who have as well the ability to communicate their vision to others in a way that gains commitment and support” (p. 1). Classroom walkthroughs are a means for leaders to obtain a clear vision of the performance level of their school and an opportunity to model and communicate their vision for school improvement to stakeholders.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical framework for this study comes from adult learning theory and motivation theory. Classroom walkthroughs are a supervisory tool used in schools to promote school improvement. One goal of school improvement is to positively impact student achievement. Principals do not directly instruct students, therefore an effective principal must create the condition in their school to systematically improve teacher effectiveness (Marzano, Schooling, & Toth, 2010). The process of facilitating the professional growth of teachers is based on an understanding of the needs of adult learners. Having an understanding of what motivates teachers to change instructional practices is critical to improving classroom instruction and subsequently promoting student achievement.

Malcolm Knowles developed a theory of adult learning, or andragogy, in the early 1970s. Andragogy is a set of assumptions about how adults learn. Knowles’ theory is based on the concepts of learning developed in ancient times by teachers such as Confucius, Aristotle, Socrates, Plato and Cicero, whose teaching experiences were with adults. These ancient teachers perceived the learning process to be one of inquiry, not simply reception of knowledge (Fidishun, 2002). Knowles’ theory identifies six assumptions of adult learning that address the following concepts: 1) the need to know; 2)

the learner's self-concept; 3) the role of the learner's experiences; 4) readiness to learn; 5) orientation to learning; and 6) motivation (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, pp. 64-69).

Knowles explains through his theory that adult learners have a need to know why it is necessary to learn something new and to understand what value the learning will have in improving their effectiveness. Learning experiences such as diagnostic performance assessments, appraisal systems and exposures to role models offer opportunities for adult learners to improve self awareness of their current level of performance and identify areas in which improvements are needed. Knowles' theory states that adult learners become ready to acquire new skills or knowledge when they perceive it is necessary to do so in order to more effectively function in their current situation (Knowles et al., 2005). Knowles points out that instructors need not wait for students to naturally have experiences that require them to acquire new knowledge but that instructors can provide those experiences through simulations, or exposure to models. Knowles further explains that adult learners are autonomous. They have developed the self-concept that they are responsible for their own decisions and actions and desire to be seen as capable and self-directed. This contradicts the concept of dependent learning many learners develop as children. Therefore, adult learners often resist experiences that cause them to feel they are being told what to do or that someone is imposing their will on them (Knowles et al., 2005). This creates a challenge for those attempting to instruct adult learners. According to Knowles (2005) instructors of adults, in this case school administrators, need to assist adult learners in realizing their role as self-directed learners responsible for the content and path of their learning.

Knowles' theory includes the understanding that adult learners have had many life experiences that have shaped their learning and identity. Therefore, ignoring or devaluing these experiences can cause resentment in the learner and become a barrier to learning. Knowles states that instruction that builds on the prior experiences of the learner such as group discussions, peer-helping, problem solving activities and simulation exercises should be the emphasis of adult learning (Knowles et al., 2005). Possessing a wealth of life experiences can also have a negative effect on adult learning. Past experiences can become a barrier to learning and new ways of thinking when they cause adults to develop biases, presumptions or habits.

Another assumption of adult learning addressed by Knowles is the learner's orientation to learning. In contrast to children who are usually subject-centered, adults tend to be task or problem-centered. Adult learners want to know how the new information or skill they are learning can be applied to assist in performing certain tasks or solving problems (Knowles et. al., 2005). Knowles explains that learning new skills, attitudes or knowledge in the context of the application is most effective (Knowles et al., 2005). Knowles' theory addresses the assumption that adults are motivated to learn by both external and internal factors. External factors that may motivate an adult to learn could include promotions, salary raises, or better jobs. Although these can be strong motivating factors, Knowles explains that internal motivating factors are more powerful. Internal factors that may affect motivation could include a desire for success, increased job satisfaction, or a sense of accomplishment.

Another theorist of adult learning, Carl Rogers, developed the theory of experiential learning. Rogers' theory, which influenced Knowles' development of the

construct of andragogy, was based on the belief that people have the innate potential and desire to learn (Kearsly, 2010). Rogers believed that it was the responsibility of the instructor to facilitate learning by establishing a positive learning environment, clearly defining the purpose of the learner, providing learning resources, balancing both the emotional and intellectual aspects of learning, and sharing personal thoughts and feelings without dominating the learning. Learning in the experiential learning theory is defined as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experiences. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 41).

Rogers’ theory of experiential learning is based on several assumptions of adult learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). First, learning is a process not an outcome. According to Kolb & Kolb (2005) in regards to the learning process, “the primary focus should be on engaging the students in a process that best enhances their learning- a process that includes feedback on the effectiveness of their learning efforts” (p. 194). Rogers’ theory is based on the idea that all learning is actually relearning and relates to existing ideas and beliefs held by the learner. In this theory, it is also believed that conflict, differences and disagreements are the forces behind the entire learning process. Learning is considered a process of adapting to the world through changes in thinking, feelings, perception and behaviors. Lastly, the learning process is based on the creation of new knowledge as opposed to the transmission of fixed ideas and understandings.

Lawler (1991) identifies six keys for leading adult learners. Lawler suggests that principals try to understand how teachers may feel about learning something new and work to reduce their anxiety. Principals should elicit and incorporate teacher

expectations into their instruction for adults and identify their strengths and expertise. When working with adult learners, principals should provide opportunities for teachers to engage in their learning. Adult learners need instruction to be relevant and immediately useful in their practice. Lawler further explains that in order to facilitate change and growth, principals should first respect adult learners as professionals and then create a climate where adults feel comfortable to take risks, and share ideas and experiences.

In school improvement efforts, the application of professional learning is best accompanied by teachers' desire to change and improve instructional practices. Therefore, theories of motivation will be examined as a compliment to adult learning theories. One such theory by Elton Mayo, examined the effect of work conditions on employee productivity. The research conducted by Mayo in the 1930s influences the organizational framework of schools today. Mayo, considered the Father of the Human Resources movement, conducted research in an electric plant on the productivity and motivation of employees. He made changes to the physical and psychological environment and measured the effect the changes had on employee productivity and motivation. His research, now referred to as the Hawthorne studies, led him to the following conclusions:

1. Employees like to belong to a group and to be viewed as a member of a group.
2. Employees like to be praised publically for doing well.
3. Informal groups that form in the workplace influence the behavior of employees that belong to that group.
4. Managers cannot ignore the social needs of employees if they want them to work for the good of the organization instead of against it.

According to Sarachek (1968), Mayo's theory is based on two assumptions: 1) people are naturally motivated to seek social alliance and cooperation with others; and 2) altering a person's environment can improve mental health, satisfaction and increased productivity.

Frederick Herzberg developed the motivation-hygiene theory. Herzberg developed his theory after an extensive review of the literature on job satisfaction and motivation (Miner, 2005). Timmreck (1977) explains that according to Herzberg's theory some factors in life are motivating factors and some are hygiene factors needed to maintain a basic level of satisfaction. The maintenance or hygiene factors are similar to the lowest level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The term hygiene in Herzberg's theory is an analogy to the health term referring to preventive measures (Timmreck, 1977). In Herzberg's theory, the hygiene factors prevent unhappiness or dissatisfaction. Herzberg identified the following hygiene factors that when provided appropriately can prevent job dissatisfaction and improve performance; company policy and administrative practices, supervision, interpersonal relations (with co-workers and supervisors), physical working conditions, job benefits and salary (Miner, 2005). The hygiene factors have a limited impact on motivation. Herzberg identified the following factors that increase motivation and job satisfaction in the workplace; achievement, verbal recognition, challenging work, responsibility, and advancement (Miner, 2005). In general, Herzberg's theory is that employees will not be motivated until the hygiene factors have been addressed.

The theories of adult learning and motivation examined in this chapter relate to this study in several ways. First, Knowles's theory of adult learning includes the need for adult learners to participate in diagnostic performance assessment and opportunities to improve self-awareness of performance levels. Knowles also explained that adults are

motivated by success and accomplishment. Rogers theory of adult learning states that adult learners must be engaged in a process that enhances their learning and includes feedback on their learning efforts. Many models of classroom walkthroughs include feedback sessions that allow teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of their instruction. The frequent visits to classrooms by administrators may motivate teachers to improve instructional practices so that they feel successful. Mayo discovered through his research that adults are motivated to improve job performance when they are singled out and made to feel special. The one-on-one nature of classroom walkthroughs breaks down the isolation teachers sometimes experience and gives them an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities to their administrator on a regular basis. Herzberg found that adults must have the basic needs of supervision and interpersonal relationships with their supervisors met to achieve job satisfaction. They must also receive verbal recognition to become motivated to improve job performance. Classroom walkthroughs allow administrators to develop a relationship with their teachers and an opportunity for administrators to recognize effective instructional practices.

Statement of the Problem

There is research to support the assertion that principals have an effect on instruction through their practices as instructional leaders. Elmore (2000) asserts that administrators spend a large part of their time making changes in the structure of the organization without much of an effect on student achievement. He explains that until administrators actually impact the instruction and learning taking place in the classroom, they will not see an increase in student achievement. Grubb and Flessa (2006) highlighted the process and necessity for instructional leadership when they stated,

“Given the complexity of schools, principals cannot simply order their teachers to teach better. Instead, they are working indirectly, creating a culture of internal accountability in which teachers improve their teaching in concert with others” (p. 520). Though research exists that supports the value of instructional leadership, including improving instructional practices, increasing administrator visibility and creating a collaborative culture where teachers are involved in the analyses of instructional and achievement data, there is little research that correlates improved student achievement levels specifically with the practice of classroom walkthroughs.

Marzano (2010) opines that the practice of classroom walkthroughs is often ineffective. He has found in his research that many schools implement walkthrough protocols that center on observations of a specific set of instructional strategies that are often unrelated to other improvement efforts of the school. Marzano explains that for walkthroughs to be effective they should align with the teacher evaluation instrument and both should align with professional development. To successfully improve instruction, districts and states should start with a common instructional model, and then align walkthroughs, teacher evaluations, and professional development with the common instructional model.

Due to the variety of formal walkthrough models, the inconsistent implementation of the practice of classroom walkthroughs among districts and schools, and the scarcity of research relating specific classroom walkthrough practices to improved student achievement, the researcher examined the relative importance principals place on the practice of classroom walkthroughs and on specific classroom walkthrough design elements. Additionally, the researcher looked for relationships among these levels of

importance, student achievement, school academic performance status, and socio-economic status.

Statement of the Purpose

Many school districts and individual schools have developed their own classroom walkthrough protocols to meet their specific school improvement needs. In most classroom walkthrough models there are specific purposes for conducting the walkthrough, a specified person or team that will visit classrooms, a list of what to look for, a walkthrough protocol, a plan for how data will be recorded and feedback will be provided. The purpose of this study is to identify relationships among principals' perceived importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs, as well as principals' perceived importance of specific classroom walkthrough design elements; it will further explore the relationships among perceptions about classroom walkthroughs and student achievement, school performance levels, and the socio-economic status of the school.

High-stakes educational reforms such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top have required states to look at new ways of measuring teacher effectiveness. Though federal funding, on average, makes up about 7% of educational revenues among states, and is accompanied by strict guidelines for spending, states are clamoring to receive this funding. The Race to the Top program is not only continuing the nation's focus on student achievement, but is also focusing on student achievement data as a measure of teacher effectiveness in summative evaluation instruments. For these reasons, examining the extent to which principals perceive classroom walkthroughs to be an important and effective method of teacher supervision, monitoring instruction, and increasing student achievement has significance and relevance to education today.

Research Questions

The researcher examined the relative importance principals place on the practice of classroom walkthroughs and the relation to socio-economic status, school academic status and student achievement. The researcher answered the following questions:

1. Is there a relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other duties and the SES status of the school?
2. Is there a relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other duties and the academic performance level of the school?
3. Is there a relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other duties and growth in student achievement?
4. Is there a relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of the classroom walkthrough design and the SES status of the school?
5. Is there a relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance the classroom walkthrough design and the academic performance level of the school?
6. Is there a relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of the classroom walkthrough design and growth in student achievement?

Rationale for the Study

In a review of the literature, conducted by the researcher, it was found that classroom walkthroughs are commonly identified as an effective leadership practice. Most of the literature pertaining to classroom walkthroughs was perceptual or procedural in nature. There was a scarcity of research that correlated the practice of classroom walkthroughs and increased student achievement. The researcher intended to contribute to the extant body of literature on classroom walkthroughs by conducting a study that identifies relationships among the level of importance principals place on the practice of classroom walkthroughs and on elements of the classroom walkthrough design to student achievement, school performance level and the socio-economic status of the school.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that all study participants completed the survey instrument honestly, accurately, and for its intended purpose.

Delimitations

This study had several delimitations that may lessen the generalizability of the findings. The information collected about the specific walkthrough practices in each school was gathered through a survey instrument completed by the principals. No observation or documentation of the actual implementation of walkthrough practices were collected by the researcher. Therefore, results were based on walkthrough practices as perceived and reported by the principal.

The respondents in the study were all elementary school principals from three school districts in metropolitan and contiguous suburban areas in the state of Georgia. No data were collected from middle or high school principals. Although schools of

various sizes and with a variety of demographic profiles were included, the fact that this is not a multi-level, multi-region or multi-state study further limits the generalizability of the findings. The assessment measures used in the study were limited to 2010 fourth and 2011 fifth grade student performance on the mathematics section of the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT).

Definitions

The following terms are used throughout the study and have been defined to provide consistency and understanding among readers:

Accountability- The responsibility of the principal to meet or exceed school-wide student achievement expectations.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)- A measure of year-to-year student achievement levels on state assessments of reading and math. Each state sets a proficiency level for reading and math that gradually increases to 100% in the year 2014 as mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).

Instructional Leadership- School leadership that blends supervision, staff development and curriculum development (Blase & Blase, 2004).

Classroom Walkthrough- Short, informal observations of classroom teachers and students conducted by administrators, coaches, mentors, peers, and others, followed by feedback, conversation, and/or action (Kachur et al., 2010).

Criterion Referenced Competency Test- Required tests in the state of Georgia which measure student acquisition of the knowledge and skill set forth in the state curriculum in the content areas of Reading, English/Language Arts, and Mathematics, Social Studies and Science. (Georgia Department of Education (GADOE), 2010).

Feedback- Accurate and straight-forward conversation from an evaluator or from a professional to help teachers improve instruction (Frase, 2001).

Georgia Performance Standards (GPS)- GPS are provided to give teachers clear expectations for instruction, assessment and student work (GADOE, 2008).

Higher-order Thinking- “A complex level of thinking that entails analyzing and classifying or organizing perceived qualities or relationships, meaningfully combining concepts and principles verbally or in the production of art works or performances, and then synthesizing ideas into supportable, encompassing thoughts or generalizations that hold true for many situations” (ArtsWork, Glossary of Assessment Terms, 2010, p. 1).

Student Engagement- The extent to which a student is actively involved in his learning.

Summative Evaluation- Annual report completed by administrators to provide teachers feedback on their instructional performance, classroom management and adherence to professional duties and responsibilities.

Visibility- A term used to describe school administrators who are approachable, frequently present in classrooms and who regularly observe and interact with teachers and students (Cotton, 2003).

Walkthrough Design- The specific scheduling, instructional elements observed, and types and frequency of feedback provided to teachers.

Summary and Organization of the Study

Education reform has required school administrators to become instructional leaders that ensure teacher effectiveness and academic success for all students.

Conducting classroom walkthroughs is one method administrators can use to accomplish these tasks. Adult learning and motivation theories indicate that in order for school

administrators to facilitate professional development among teachers, they should provide teachers with frequent feedback regarding effective and ineffective practice. Doing so creates opportunities for teachers to realize the need for improvement and to learn through daily instructional experiences. One way school administrators can indirectly have an effect on student achievement, effectively monitor instruction, and provide teachers with feedback and necessary professional development is to align these elements with classroom walkthrough practices.

In Chapter I, the researcher has provided an introduction to the study, a statement of the problem, and the purpose of the study. Background information and a theoretical framework have been provided to demonstrate a need for the study. Delimitations of the study have been presented. Definitions have been provided for terms used throughout the study. A review of the literature relevant to this study is presented in Chapter II. Chapter III provides a description of the methodology including the research questions and hypotheses, the research design, information about study participants and instrumentation, and statistical analysis to be used in the study. Findings of the study are presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V provides a discussion of the findings, implications of the study, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In Chapter II, instructional leadership, leadership standards, and teacher evaluations will be examined. To provide the reader with an understanding of elements commonly included in the practice of classroom walkthroughs, three formal models of classroom walk-throughs will be outlined. Reported beneficial effects of conducting classroom walkthroughs on student achievement and classroom instruction will be provided.

In the last two decades, there has been a standards and accountability movement in education. Starting in 1989 with Goals 2000, which established a framework for creating academic standards and measuring student achievement progress, and then No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002 that requires all students to be proficient at mastering state standards by 2014, educators have been required to reexamine their efforts to increase student achievement. The most recent education reform effort is Race to the Top, a program that plans to offer over 4.35 billion dollars in competitive grants to states that implement innovative strategies in an effort to increase student achievement.

Race to the Top has required states to look at new ways of measuring teacher effectiveness. According to Fuhrman (2010), most current accountability systems measure the percent of children reaching proficiency. When this type of accountability system is used, schools making progress but not reaching the determined goal are not rewarded and schools who have already reached the goal are not encouraged to improve. The Race to the Top program offers strong incentives for states to work collaboratively with teachers and stakeholders to design and develop evaluation systems (American

Teacher, 2010). The president of the American Federation of Teachers, Randi Weingarten, reports that without this collaboration “we could be back in a situation where top down management practices continue, data collection and measurement for measurement’s sake still rule the day, and responsibility for student performance is not shared with anyone beyond teachers and schools” (American Teacher, 2010, p. 13). One of the accountability requirements in the Race to the Top program requires states to measure teachers’ effect on student achievement scores as part of the summative teacher evaluation. This aspect of Race to the Top is controversial, prompting many teachers’ unions to refuse endorsement of state applications for the grant; however, this approach has been endorsed by the American Federation of Teachers.

The value-added measure of teacher effectiveness takes into account situations that are beyond a teacher’s control and involves sophisticated statistical techniques that measure student academic growth over one or more years. Fuhrman (2010) outlines possible complications with the value-added measure of teacher effectiveness. One complication is that there are many teachers whose students are not given achievement tests, such as those who teach art, music and physical education. An additional complication is that most administrators do not randomly assign students to teachers. They often place students who struggle the most with the best instructors; this could affect the value added scores for these teachers. Additionally, students are tested on different content within subject areas from year to year and most state assessments are not meant to be compared grade to grade. Value-added measures can also be affected by student transiency, class size and extent to which students receive academic assistance outside of school.

Teacher Evaluation

The process of evaluating teachers is governed by state law. Holland and Garman (2001) state that criteria mandated by state legislatures and local policies give school administrators the authority to observe and then rate the performance of teachers. Teacher evaluations serve two purposes (quality assurance and accountability) and are utilized to assess quality of teaching, dismissal, tenure and promotion (Haefele, 1993; Dagely & Orso, 1991). As long ago as 1922, Burton described the tasks he deemed most important in teacher supervision: a) the improvement of the teaching act, b) the improvement of teachers in service, c) the selection and organization of subject matter, d) testing and measuring, and e) the rating of teachers (Olivia & Pawlas, 2004). Ultimately, school administrators are focused on producing a summative evaluation that rates a teacher as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

The Georgia statute governing teacher evaluation (Georgia Code: Education-Title 20, Section 20-2-210) outlines the specific procedures and requirements for teacher evaluations. The law states that every employee shall be evaluated annually. Additionally, employees receiving an unsatisfactory annual evaluation should be given the opportunity to complete a professional development plan. This law also specifically lists what should be included in the annual evaluation of teachers. The following items required for teacher evaluations relate to the practice of conducting classroom walkthroughs and measuring teacher effectiveness:

- Information that indicates the teacher's progress in meeting the school's student achievement goals;
- Information from classroom observations conducted throughout the year; and

- Information about participation in professional development and the application of concepts learned in the classroom.

Under Georgia Code 20-2-210, the state board is required to develop a model evaluation instrument for all personnel certificated by the Professional Standards Commission. The model evaluation instrument, Class Analysis of State Standards (CLASS) Keys Teacher Evaluation System, has been developed to assist Georgia school districts in reforming teacher evaluations (Georgia Department of Education, 2009). School districts are not required to utilize the CLASS Keys model, however are encouraged to do so, either in entirety or in portions. The CLASS Keys model serves two purposes a) school improvement, and b) accountability. The model is both formative and summative and evaluates a teacher's performance in five areas: a) curriculum and planning, b) standards based instruction, c) assessment of student learning, c) professionalism, and d) student achievement. The CLASS Keys model lists specific standards for each of the areas evaluated and provides a rubric with examples of evidence and artifacts. Teacher practices are rated as: not evident, emerging, proficient, or exemplary for each standard under each of the five areas assessed. The CLASS Keys model has three phases. The first phase is the pre-evaluation phase and includes a self assessment and professional growth plan to be developed by the teacher and a pre-evaluation conference between the teacher and administrator. Phase two is the evidence collection phase, which includes both formal and informal observations and collection of other related evidence. This is the phase where administrators can utilize the practice of classroom walkthroughs to collect evidence of quality instruction and provide useful feedback to teachers about their classroom performance. The CLASS keys model defines

informal observations as being unannounced and 5-15 minutes in length. During the observation the administrator should focus on a limited number of elements that can be appropriately observed during the short observation. It is recommended that teachers receive feedback within five working days of the observation. This feedback can be written or shared in a conference. It is recommended that administrators conduct at least two informal observations for each teacher prior to completing the annual evaluation form. Phase three is the annual evaluation phase, which includes the administrator assigning a performance rating for each of the areas evaluated during the school year and then assigning an overall rating. For teachers who receive an overall rating of Unsatisfactory, a professional development plan is required.

One purpose for teacher evaluations is to ensure that all students are taught by competent teachers. In order to effectively evaluate teachers, school administrators need to be knowledgeable about a) what to evaluate, b) how to observe instruction and analyze the observation, and c) how to turn observation data into meaningful feedback that helps teachers improve instruction (Fischer, 2010). Classroom walkthroughs provide principals an additional way to gather data about teacher practices and effectiveness. Further, they provide opportunities for administrators to provide recognition and feedback, which are factors found to improve teacher motivation. For these reasons, teacher evaluations can be used as incentives to direct teachers toward improvement and professional growth (Frase, 1992). The need for this type of instructional supervision and subsequent feedback may have become popular in part due to the inefficient and ineffective traditional means of instructional supervision. Loup, Garland, Ellett and Ruggott (1996) report that most common evaluation practices serve as a monitoring system for basic teaching competence

and are limited in the ability improve student achievement. Kerr, Marsh, Ikemoto and Derilek (2006) report that by focusing classroom walkthroughs on elements on which teachers are receiving professional development and support, and by making walkthroughs connected to the larger improvement efforts of a school, school administrators communicate the constructive purpose of the walkthroughs. This subsequently makes feedback from the principal more meaningful.

Marshall (2005) explains why traditional instructional supervision is often ineffectual. When principals only formally observe teachers teaching one lesson a year, the information they are using to complete the evaluation report is only representative of a minute fraction of the teachers' actual performance. The advice the principal offers the teacher is typically not valued if the teacher knows that the principal only visits them once a year. The pressure that once a year observations put on teachers can shut down the adult learning process. The anxiety they may feel can cause them to ignore feedback, avoid admitting mistakes or be too uncomfortable to talk openly about areas that need improvement. Marshall opines that often the evaluation process has been designed by the state or district to be a tool for dismissing teachers. Consequently, teacher unions advocate teacher evaluations that are principal proof and protect teachers from unfair evaluations. The resulting evaluation is one that allows mediocre teachers to slip by with a satisfactory rating and comments that are unlikely to improve the teachers' performance. Researchers have linked classroom observations conducted by administrators and the subsequent feedback to student academic performance (Heck, Larson, & Marcoulides, 1990; Evans & Teddlie, 1995; Butler, 1997). According to Cotton (2003), principals in high-achieving schools do not visit classroom for social

purposes only, nor do they visit only for mandated evaluations. In contrast, they visit often to purposely study the instructional practices of their teachers and provide teachers with feedback after visits. Heck (1992) discovered that, “the amount of time principals spend directly observing classroom practices was one of the three most important predictors of student achievement” (p. 30). Further research confirms that in high-achieving schools, principals make frequent visits to classrooms for the purpose of observing instructional practices (Larsen, 1987; Menedez-Morse, 1991). In a meta-analysis of 31 studies on leadership practices and their correlation to student academic achievement, Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2003) found that there was a .27 (average .25) correlation between monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of school practices and their effect on student learning and improved student achievement.

Schmoker (2006) asserts the need for improved instructional supervision. He contends that in most districts there is a lack of formal systematic models for instructional supervision. His concerns include that teachers who utilize ineffective practices continue to do so because they rarely receive feedback for improvement. He finds the current systems of teacher evaluation to be highly ineffective. Schmoker explains that even the most inept teachers can put on a good show for their administrators twice a year. They then receive a passing evaluation and continue to be ineffective. Schmoker believes that the process of evaluating teachers should be ongoing and aligned to a common language of instruction. Schmoker also expresses his support for the concept of merit pay for teachers. He does not believe an ineffective tenured teacher should have a higher salary than a highly effective new teacher just because he or she has been teaching longer. Schmoker believes that the current way salaries are decided, along with poorly designed

teacher evaluations, promotes mediocrity. Iwanicki (2001) reports that, “Teacher evaluations are most effective when they connect to student achievement and align with professional development and school improvement” (p. 6). Iwanicki explains that evaluations should analyze teaching in regards to what students are learning and integrate both teacher evaluations and staff development processes to facilitate school improvement.

The traditional method of teacher evaluations involving scheduled observations of instruction once or twice a year has been scrutinized and several alternative evaluation procedures have surfaced (McNergney & Imig, 2003). School administrators are using strategies to improve teacher quality that include providing quality professional development structured around school and district goals and using teacher evaluations to support teacher quality. Danielson (2001) reports several trends in teacher evaluations. One is a differentiated approach to teacher evaluation that is based on different timelines, procedures and activities for different groups of teachers. Typically in this approach, new teachers receive annual evaluations and experienced or tenured teachers are evaluated every 2-4 years. Additionally, the evaluation criteria are differentiated for different groups of teachers. Other evaluation approaches allow teachers to play a more active role by participating in self-directed activities such as creating a portfolio to demonstrate criteria not easily observed in a classroom observation, or participation in professional conversations and reflection.

The push for improved teacher quality has developed from three phases of school reform: 1) the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk* focused educators on issues such as lengthening the school day and requiring student to take more academic courses; 2) the

1990s push for rigorous academic standards and high stake assessments, and 3) the 1996 publication of *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, which confirmed that the quality of individual teachers mattered (Danielson, 2001). Most recently, the Race to the Top program has led states to reform teacher evaluation processes.

One section of the Race for the Top application, entitled Great Leaders and Teachers, requires states to propose a plan for developing an evaluation system, conducting evaluations and using evaluation data to make decisions about student learning. This section of the application carries the most weight in the overall application score. Georgia is one of the states that submitted a proposed evaluation plan on the Race to the Top application. The proposed evaluation plan will include a Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM), a Leader Effectiveness Measure (LEM) and a District Effectiveness Measure (DEM). The TEM and LEM will include the use of a quantitative rubric based on the CLASS Keys, a value-added score to measure the effect of teachers on student achievement, the reduction of the achievement gap and other quantitative measures as designed, tested and evaluated by the state and other participating agencies.

The practice of evaluating teachers is governed by state law and serves the purpose of identifying satisfactory and unsatisfactory teachers. The Race to the Top initiative is requiring states to take an even deeper look at teacher quality, and, among other measures, is requiring administrators to rate a teacher's effectiveness based on student achievement scores. According to Georgia laws, teachers must receive an evaluation annually and administrators are encouraged to use the Georgia CLASS Keys evaluation model in its entirety or as a guide. In addition to the annual formal observation, the Georgia CLASS Keys evaluation system encourages administrators to

conduct informal teacher observations of 5-10 minutes. The Georgia CLASS Keys model lists specific observable behaviors administrators should monitor during classroom observations. This process is very similar to many formal models of classroom walkthroughs. The practice of conducting these informal observations or classroom walkthroughs is significant because research has shown the frequency with which administrators visit classrooms relates to increased student achievement.

Teacher Effectiveness

The standards and accountability movement has resulted in high expectations for student learning, standards for leadership, and demand for more effective systems to measure teacher effectiveness. If there are large differences in teacher effectiveness, then identifying more effective teachers and those factors that cause them to be more effective is important in improving student achievement (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004). Researchers have attempted to identify specific factors that contribute to a teachers' effectiveness, including educational background, years of experiences, class size, and student and school SES levels.

Some reports indicate that teacher effectiveness is increased when teachers cover content that is closely aligned to student achievement measures (Brimer, Madaus, Chapman, Kallaghan, & Wood, 1978). Measuring teacher effectiveness is not as simple as comparing test scores for students in a teacher's class one year, to test scores in the same teacher's class the following year. Many variables must be considered when reading research studies of teacher effectiveness. Factors that are out of a teacher's control can influence the achievement levels of his or her students. For example, parents choose the neighborhoods where they live and, as a result, the schools their children

attend are based on preference and financial resources (Tiebout, 1956). Another factor is that students are often assigned to certain teachers based on specific student characteristics or teacher qualities. For example, more experienced teachers may be assigned higher achieving students, or lower achieving students depending on principal preference.

Sanders and Rivers (1996) studied the cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future student academic achievement and found that within grade levels, the most dominating factor affecting student academic gain is teacher effect. Teacher effectiveness in this study was determined by the Tennessee Value-Added System (TVAAS), which has three components: a) a testing process that results in scales that are strongly related to the curriculum and produces measurement one grade level up and one grade level down, b) construction and expansion of a longitudinal data base, and c) a statistical process that uses a multivariate, longitudinal analysis to produce estimates of the desired effects. They found that teacher effect has a cumulative impact, noting that students who began with similar abilities and achievement levels had very different academic outcomes based on the effectiveness of practitioners in the sequence of teachers they were assigned. The study also found that the residual effect of both effective and ineffective teachers were measureable two years later, regardless of teacher effectiveness in later grades (Sanders & Rivers). Additionally, the study found that regardless of a student's beginning achievement level or ability level, all students made academic progress when they were taught by effective teachers. The study asserted that as teacher effectiveness increased, the lowest achieving students were the first to make academic progress, followed by students with average academic performance, followed by students

performing above average (Sanders & Rivers). Sanders and Rivers suggest that school administrators apply their findings to improve learning opportunities for all students in two ways. First, administrators should ensure that students are not assigned to ineffective teachers more than once and when assigned to ineffective teachers, making sure that they are assigned to a highly effective teacher before and after. Secondly, administrators should implement formative teacher evaluations including the analysis of student achievement data by the teachers, as well as provide the necessary professional development.

In a study conducted by Nye et al. (2004), teacher effect on student achievement was estimated using the data from a four-year experiment in which students and teachers were randomly assigned to classes. The purpose of the study was to identify effective teachers and the factors that caused teachers to be more effective. The researchers found that a variation in class size within a treatment group could not explain teacher effects. In examining how a teacher's experience and education applied to teacher effectiveness, they found that the effect of teacher experience on achievement status was overall smaller than the effects on achievement gains. Teacher experience had a significant effect in second grade reading achievement and close to significant effect in third grade mathematics. There were no significant effects on achievement status related to teacher education. This study concluded that there are substantial differences in teachers' abilities to improve academic achievement in their students. Further, this study concluded that teacher effects are larger than school effects, in other words student achievement is affected more by which teacher a child has than which school they attend. In regards to socio-economic status and teacher effect, this study concluded that teacher

effect was much larger in low SES schools meaning that it matters more which teacher a child receives in a low SES school than a high SES school.

As the United States government begins to require states to rate teacher effectiveness and possibly determine teacher salary based on these ratings, school administrators find themselves challenged with the task of fairly and accurately measuring teacher effectiveness. While research shows a direct link between teacher effectiveness and student achievement, defining what factors cause a teacher to be effective has been difficult. As administrators work through this new direction in teacher evaluations, they can use the process of classroom walkthroughs along with analysis of student achievement data, to monitor teacher effectiveness and to determine the professional development needed to improve the instructional practices of teachers. Further, using knowledge gained through classroom walkthroughs regarding the instructional practices of teachers will aid administrators in avoiding assigning a student to an ineffective teacher in concurrent school years.

Teacher Motivation

As accountability has increased over the last two decades, school administrators have been challenged to find ways to motivate teachers to perform at higher levels. In a study conducted by Yarrow (2009) it was determined that 40% of teachers fell into the disheartened category, 37% in the contented category and 23% in the idealist category. Among the teachers who were identified as disheartened, only 14% rated their principal as excellent in supporting them in their teaching. Sixty-one percent of the disheartened teachers reported that the lack of administrator support was a major drawback to teaching. School environments often lack positive rewards and actually work against

teachers' efforts to improve professionally and to increase student achievement (Peterson, 1995). The majority of teachers' work is done in isolation without the support of colleagues. Because of the organizational structure, teachers are difficult to supervise, rarely given feedback, and find it difficult to collaborate with other teachers (Schmoker, 2006).

Studies show that teachers are motivated more by intrinsic rewards than extrinsic rewards. Self-respect, responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment are a few intrinsic rewards that motivate teachers (Ellis, 1984). Peters and Waterman (2004) indicate that the best way to motivate employees is to foster a sense of success in individuals. In a study conducted by Kocaba (2009), it was concluded that having an effective administrator governing the school was among the most important factors affecting teacher motivation. Other factors identified in the study included effective communication among school members, being recognized for success, being part of the decision making process, and being regarded as a role model. Herzberg (1964) concluded in his studies of employee motivation that intrinsic rewards such as self-respect, sense of accomplishment, and personal growth were more satisfying than extrinsic factors such as salaries, fringe benefits or job security. Brodinsky and Neill (1983) conducted a survey of school administrators and teachers and found that there were three practices that improved morale and motivation in teachers: a) shared governance, b) in-service education, and c) systematic, supportive evaluation. Administrators can utilize evaluation systems to motivate teachers if the systems are designed to provide teachers with feedback that can help them assess their own performance level. On the other hand, an evaluation system that does not include

opportunities to provide teachers with feedback can induce anxiety, and cause mistrust and resentment of administrators (Ellis, 1984).

Frase (1992) explains why external rewards such as financial rewards, advancement opportunities do not increase teacher motivation. He explains that there are two sets of factors that affect the motivation of teachers to perform at their highest level: work context factors and work content factors. Similar to Herzberg's hygiene factors, context factors are those that meet the most basic needs of teachers. These factors include class size, availability of materials, quality of administrator supervision, and basic needs like money and security. Teachers need the context factors to be met in order to avoid dissatisfaction and discouragement. However, addressing these factors does not necessarily lead to improved instruction. For example, a study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (1997) concluded that teacher compensation had little relationship to long-term job satisfaction. Further, Berry (2005) reports two examples of failed attempts to use salary incentives to attract teachers to low-performing schools. In one instance in South Carolina, offering an \$18,000 salary bonus attracted only 20% of the teacher specialists needed in the state's low performing schools. In Massachusetts, a mid career alternative certification program offering a \$20,000 signing bonus only attracted a fraction of the teachers needed. According to Frase (1992), content factors are intrinsic and motivate teachers to perform at their highest level. These factors include recognition, challenging work, achievement, opportunities for professional development and empowerment. Data from the survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (1997) concluded that parental support, participation in decision

making and school policy, and control in the classroom were related to teachers' job satisfaction.

Research has shown that teachers are primarily motivated by intrinsic factors such as self-respect, a sense of accomplishment and personal growth. Studies have shown a direct link in teacher dissatisfaction and lack of motivation to a lack of administrator support. Administrators can provide the support needed to increase teacher motivation by conducting classroom walkthroughs, providing feedback to teachers on their instructional practices, facilitating collaboration and school-wide communication, and involving teachers in decision made at the school.

Instructional Leadership and Monitoring Teacher Performance

As the level of accountability for school achievement has increased, so has the need for school principals to examine their role in the school improvement process. Principals are becoming more than managers of schools and are expected to serve in the capacity of instructional leaders. The school principal is expected to manage the school while implementing learning for overall school success (Yavuz & Bas, 2010). They are responsible for working with stakeholders from students and parents to school board members and policy makers and in addition to that they are expected to be the instructional teacher leader of the school (Mangin, 2007). The concept of instructional leadership is not new, although a shift in educational policies has, in the past, often forced some principals to act more as an officer of an organization, focused on paperwork and managerial tasks, than instructional leaders (Jones, 1999; Law, 1999). Marsh (2000) asserted that accountability requirements force principals to lower the priority of instructional leadership and instead focus on tracking achievement data and providing

instructional support, leaving instructional leadership to teachers. However, the literature suggests that accountability does not remove principals from the role of instructional leader (Mitchell & Castel, 2005). In a study conducted by Newmann, King, and Rigdon (1997) it was found that principals who focused solely on mandated accountability measures did not implement educational changes that were responsive to the real needs of the school. Further, a study conducted by Malen, Croniger, Muncey, and Redmond-Jones (2002) found that attempts to improve student achievement by restructuring or re-staffing a school did not lead to improved achievement. These studies suggest that in order to improve achievement, one cannot simply replace the principals or teachers or focus only on data analysis, but that schools need principals who are instructional leaders and are in tune with instructional practices occurring in their school. The literature suggests that there is an increased interest in the concept of principal as instructional leader (Dufour, 2002; Hoy & Hoy, 2003; Ruebling, Stow & Kayona, 2004).

Some define instructional leadership as the development of a community of professional inquiry among teachers and building organizational capacity for school improvement rather than direct instructional intervention by the principal (Mitchell & Castle, 2005). Some researchers argue that the role of principals is that of a facilitator of collaborative inquiry, problem solving and school development (Grimmett, 1996; Reitzug, 1997). This is similar to the perspective of Blase and Blase (1999), who view the principal as instructional leader as one who promotes professional dialogue among teachers. In their study, teachers identified strategies used by principals to promote dialogue including “making suggestions, giving feedback, modeling, using inquiry and soliciting advice and opinions from teachers, and giving praise” (p. 367). Similarly,

Grimmett (1996) identified the following as the roles of the principal as instructional leader: focusing teacher discussion on action, connecting teacher action to student learning, and modeling experimentation and collegiality. Alternatively, Hannay and Ross (1997) found that a principal's direct involvement with school improvement initiatives is crucial. In a study conducted by Mitchell and Castle (2005), it was found that principals send a distinct message to their staff about the importance of teaching and learning by the amount of personal attention they paid to these areas. In a study conducted by Giannangelo and Malone (1987) 90.2% of teachers reported that being an instructional leader was the most important role for a principal. Chubb and Moe (1990) concluded in a study supported by the Brookings Institute that student achievement is not significantly affected by state or local policy or by school resources, but that student achievement is influenced by what principals do to improve the quality of instruction and teacher effectiveness. Andrews et al. (1986) found that there was a positive correlation with high achieving schools and strong instructional leaders. Andrews, Basom and Basom (1991) reported that effective instructional leaders maintain visibility, are resource providers, instructional resources, and communicators. As resource provider, an instructional leader identifies the strengths and weaknesses of teachers through classroom visits and assigns roles based on the information. As an instructional resource, the instructional leader is knowledgeable about quality instruction, can assess teacher effectiveness and can analyze what increases student success. Effective instructional leaders clearly communicate the mission and vision of the school and can articulate what teachers are doing right. Instructional leaders maintain a visible presence in the school through frequent classroom visits.

The responsibility of instructional leadership does not fall simply on the principal; rather, it is a shared responsibility among other school leaders, staff and students.

According to Kachur et al. (2010), principals should “possess tools for engaging staff members in productive conversations about the improvement of teaching and learning.

The classroom walkthrough is one of those effective tools” (p. 9). Blase and Blase

(2000) report that “effective instructional leadership integrates collaboration, peer coaching, inquiry, collegial study groups and reflective discussion into a holistic

approach to promote professional dialog among educators” (p. 137). A study conducted

by Yavuz and Bas (2009) found that teachers perceive the following to be responsibilities of the principal as instructional leader:

- Determination and dissemination of the school’s purpose;
- Management of instruction including the creation of opportunities for teachers to successfully implement the school curriculum;
- Consistent evaluation of instructional practices, curriculum implementation and student achievement;
- Providing necessary resources and support to teachers and students; and
- Creating a positive school climate conducive to learning and teaching.

Blase and Blase (2004) explain that there are three main elements of instructional leadership that should be implemented simultaneously in order for a principal to be effective. All three elements are part of the walkthrough process. The first element is conferencing. When principals conference with teachers, they are able to make suggestions, praise efforts, gather opinions, and provide valuable feedback for improvement. The next element is staff development. Principals should provide teachers

with the tools and training necessary to maximize teacher effectiveness and improve instructional practices. Third, teachers should engage in the practice of reflection. Reflection can be modeled by the instructional leader and facilitated during conferences.

Classroom walkthroughs are an essential tool for instructional leadership. Schmoker (2006) describes the purpose of classroom walkthroughs: “We are not looking for perfection. Nor are we looking for bad teachers. We’re looking for school-wide patterns with respect to two things: a) the general quality and substance of instruction, and b) students’ attentiveness- are most of them on task?” (p. 15). Conducting classroom walkthroughs allows principals to act as instructional leaders by:

- Becoming more familiar with the school's curriculum and teachers' instructional practices;
- Gauging the climate of a school: Are students engaged? Are cross-curricular concepts a part of everyday teaching? Are new teachers catching on?
- Developing a team atmosphere as teachers and administrators examine instruction and student motivation and achievement together; and
- Establishing themselves as campus leaders and instructional mentors, influencing teaching, learning, and ongoing school renewal (Ginsberg, & Murphy 2002).

A study conducted by the Consortium for Policy Research (CPRE) in 1993 evaluated the impact and implementation of the America’s Choice School design. In this study, America’s Choice cluster leaders were asked to identify principals who were strong instructional leaders. Out of 20 America’s Choice clusters of schools, 19

principals were nominated and nine were randomly selected to participate in the study. Data in this study were collected through in-depth interviews, a census survey of all America's Choice principals conducted by the CPRE that asked principals about content knowledge, time spent in classrooms and what they did in classrooms, and site visits. The results of the study identified components of instructional leadership. The study indicated that the principals identified as instructional leaders spent substantially more time in classrooms observing instruction and learning than did the other America's Choice principals. Out of the 17 principals who were nominated as instructional leaders who responded to the survey, 88% observed instruction daily; the corresponding percentage of principals who observed instruction daily among all America's Choice principals who responded to the survey was 39%. The study further indicated that the principals who were identified as instructional leaders focused more on talking with students and looking at their work than on the teachers' instruction (Supovitz, J. & Poglinco, S., 2001).

Strong instructional leadership has been linked to increased student achievement. In the current era of accountability, principals are required to be instructional leaders. No longer can the focus be merely on school management, statewide testing measures, or staffing as ways to improve student achievement. As instructional leaders, school administrators should be involved in every aspect of curriculum and instruction in their schools; they handle this obligation by conducting classroom walkthroughs, providing feedback to teachers on their instructional practice, promoting inquiry and professional dialogue, providing appropriate professional development and encouraging teachers to be reflective and collaborative practitioners.

Standards for Leaders

The trend towards increased accountability has resulted in not only educational standards for student learning but also in standards for the role of school administrator. The Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders (ISLLCS) defines the role of a school principal as an instructional and curricular leader. These standards are issued by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and guide the preparation, training and evaluations of school leaders in most states. Six leadership standards detail knowledge, disposition and performance targets needed to promote the success of all students (Trevisan, 2002, Malone & Caddell, 2000). Standard 2 most closely relates to classroom walkthroughs:

An educational leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and professional growth (ISLLCS, 2008).

By conducting classroom walkthroughs, school leaders can monitor instruction and identify staff development needs. Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, and Poston (2004) explain that the only way administrators can have an impact on student achievement is by changing the teacher behaviors in the classroom. Walkthroughs can be catalyst for a change in teacher behaviors by coaching teachers, without passing judgment, and identifying areas in need of improvements and providing opportunities for teachers to share best practices (Pitler & Goodwin, 2009).

In the state of Georgia, Kathy Cox, former State Superintendent of Schools, along with the Georgia Department of Education, established the School Keys. The School Keys, designed and based on the frameworks of research by Marzano, Waters and

McNulty (2003), serve as a guide to Georgia schools by outlining what school practitioners need to know, understand and be able to do. The Leadership Strand of the School Keys has several standards and elements that can be addressed by conducting classroom walkthroughs. Leadership Standard 1 states that, “The principal and school administrators provide leadership that reinforces a commitment to high expectations for student achievement while promoting the school as a true community” (Georgia Department of Education, 2007, p. 67). Under this standard, element L 1.4 addresses the need to monitor instruction; “School leadership coaches, supervises, and monitors curriculum, assessment and instruction” (Georgia Department of Education, 2007, p. 70). To be fully operational in this area, monitoring of instruction and assessment should occur on a regular basis. Leadership Standard 2 further defines the role of principal as instructional leader: “The principal and school administrators facilitate the development, implementation and maintenance of a supportive learning environment for teachers and students through strong management and organizational skills” (Georgia Department of Education, 2007, p. 72). Element L2.3 under Standard 2 addresses the need for school leaders to maintain visibility. To be fully operational in this area, school leaders are expected to consistently be visible to staff, students and parents and participate in grade level/subject area meetings. School leaders who visit classrooms establish themselves as instructional leaders and gain a greater awareness of what type of instruction is taking place in the classroom.

Classroom Walkthrough Models and Purported Benefits of These Models

Numerous formal walkthrough models have been developed by both not-for-profit and for-profit organizations. The ultimate goals of classroom walkthroughs are to

monitor the implementation of curriculum and to improve instruction and student learning; however, the protocols used to reach these goals differ greatly among models. Some models are utilized by schools to monitor instruction for the purpose of evaluating the implementation of professional learning and assessing future professional learning needs. Other models are designed to promote teacher reflection on instructional decisions being made and the impact those decisions have on student learning. Some walkthrough models focus on student interviews and observations of their behaviors and responses during instruction. This section serves to introduce the reader to three examples of formal walkthrough models based on each of these three foci and common elements of the classroom walkthrough practice.

The LearningWalk Routine, designed by Resnick, is a model based on research as a foundation that utilizes data collected during walkthroughs as a guide for professional development opportunities. This model was developed at the University of Pittsburg Institute for Learning and is a tool used to support a school's systematic approach to instructional improvement (Kachur et al., 2010). The LearningWalk is based on three major concepts: a) teaching a rigorous curriculum, b) high standards for learning and alignment of assessments to these standards, and c) student effort is an expectation and the learning environment promotes that effort (Downey, English, & Steffy, 2009). The LearningWalk is considered to be part of a process where teachers receive professional development and are allowed time to implement their learning. LearningWalk observations are conducted and based on the data collected; more professional development will be provided (Downey et al., 2009). The observations are conducted by a team made of school administrators or teacher-leaders, depending on the learning needs

of the participants or school/staff. “During LearningWalks, walkers focus on the instructional core- how teachers teach, how students learn, what gets taught to whom, and how a school is organized so that effort creates ability. The lens through which LearningWalk participants view the instructional core is one or more of the Principles of Learning” (Goldman, Bill, Johnston, & McConachie, 2005, p. 9).

Evidence is collected based on nine Principles of Learning (Downey et al., 2009, p. 214):

1. Organizing for Effort
2. Clear Expectations
3. Fair and Credible Evaluations
4. Recognition of Accomplishment
5. Academic Rigor in a Thinking Curriculum
6. Accountable Talk
7. Socializing Intelligence
8. Self-Management of Learning
9. Learning as Apprenticeship

According to Resnick and Hall (2003), the principle of Organizing for Effort refers to setting high expectations for student effort and organizing the learning environment to support this effort. This includes aligning assessments to learning standards. The Clear Expectations learning principle means that teachers clearly communicate to students what they are expected to learn. This might include models, descriptive criteria or posted learning standards. Principle 3, Fair and Credible Evaluations refers to the use of assessments for which students can prepare, assesses their

learning efforts and are credible to stakeholders. The next principle, recognition of accomplishment, refers to motivating students through celebrations of work that meets standards or is progressing toward standards. Principle 6, Accountable Talk, describes the type of discussions that should take place during instruction. Students should be able to respond to and develop what other students say. Doing so requires students to apply knowledge about the topic that is relevant and accurate. Socializing Intelligence refers to providing instruction that encourages student to use problem-solving and reasoning skills. The eighth principle of learning, Self-Management of Learning, refers to students' use of metacognition and self-monitoring during learning. The last principle, Learning as Apprenticeship, is the teachers' effort to set up a learning environment where students acquire complex interdisciplinary knowledge, have opportunities to utilize complex thinking while being provided mentorship and coaching while completing extended projects.

Observers typically spend 5-25 minutes in each classroom observing student work and talking with students and teachers. An open-ended form is used for data gathering allowing the observer to take notes about any type of evidence deemed necessary. Feedback in the LearningWalk Routine model is delivered in the form of a letter to the entire school community. The letter includes patterns observed, reflective questions, and follow-up professional development needs (Kachur et al., 2010, pp. 152-153).

Carolyn Downey developed the Three-Minute Classroom Walkthrough as a protocol to be designed by the school to promote examination of the instructional practices of individual teachers and the relationship to student performance (Kachur et al., 2010). The target outcome of this walkthrough model is to assist teachers in

reflecting proactively about instructional decisions. The Three-Minute Classroom Walkthrough is designed around five key concepts (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase & Poston, 2004, pp. 2-4). First, classroom visits are expected to be short, around 2-3 minutes. In this model the intent is not to evaluate the teacher but to gather information about instructional practices to be used as feedback for professional growth. By conducting frequent short classroom visits, administrators should be able to visit 10-12 classrooms during a 30 minute period. By allowing the administrators to visit all classrooms regularly, they are able to have a more accurate understanding of what is happening in the school (Downey et al., 2004). The second key idea in the Three-Minute Classroom Walkthrough model is that feedback from the walkthrough should trigger reflection that might be useful for the teacher in improving instructional practices. Third, there should be a curricular as well as instructional focus during the walkthrough. The administrator should focus on decisions being made about curriculum and instruction and the impact the decisions have on student learning and behavior. The fourth key idea in the Three-Minute Classroom Walkthrough model is that follow-up with the teacher should occur but is not necessary after every walkthrough visit. Downey suggests completing 8-10 visits before engaging the teacher in reflective dialogue. The final key idea of the Three-Minute Classroom Walkthrough method is that there is not a checklist of certain teaching practices to observe. This idea differs from most other formal walkthrough models. Instead of checking off elements on a checklist, the administrator conducting a classroom walkthrough simply takes notes on curricular and instructional decisions being made.

When conducting the Downey Three-Minute Walkthrough, the observer focuses on five observation areas. First, he or she observes the student orientation to work. In doing so, he or she determines if students are attending to the work during the observation. Next, the observer determines what objectives the teacher is teaching and the alignment of the objective to the district's curriculum. The observer also "Walks the Walls" to look for evidence of past learning objects or instructional decisions that have been made. And lastly, the observer looks for any safety or health issues that need to be addressed (Downey et al., 2004, p. 21).

Feedback is an important element of the Downey Three-Minute Walkthrough. Focused feedback that is brief and one-on-one is the most powerful way to impact and change a teacher's behavior (Hall & Hord, 2000; Eisenberg, 2010). The Downey Three-Minute Walkthrough has three goals related to the facilitation of collaborative, reflective dialogue: a) development of interdependent, self-reflective, self-analytical, self-reflective teachers; b) teachers who continually want to improve their teaching practice; and c) teachers who are committed to improving instruction and teaching the district's curriculum (Downey et al., 2004). The premise behind conducting reflective dialogue after conducting walkthroughs is that reflection is necessary because change is interpersonal and come from the inside, it is an intrinsic motivation strategy that allows teachers to make their own decisions, acknowledges a teachers readiness level to learn, and encourages self-analysis and collegial interactions (Downey et al., 2004).

The Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI) is a walkthrough protocol focused on increasing student engagement in meaningful learning activities by collecting school-wide data to be studied collaboratively by the school staff and used for problem solving

(Kachur et al., 2010). This model was developed in 1996 by Jerry Valentine and Bryan Painter. The IPI supports the findings of Dufour, Dufour and Eaker (2005) in their synthesis of manuscripts written by 21 leading experts in school improvement that concluded “students would be better served if educators embraced learning rather than teaching as the mission of their school, if they worked collaboratively to help all students learn, and if they used formative assessments and a focus on results to guide their practice to foster continuous improvement” (p. 5). In this model the observer systematically visits classrooms to gather data on student engagement using a specific observation protocol outlining categories of student engagement. There are three broad categories are student engagement, each with two sub categories. The first category is Student Engaged Instruction. A subcategory of Student Engaged Instruction is Student Active Engaged in Learning, which refers to learning that involves researching, hands-on activities, problem solving, or cooperative activities that engage students in higher-order thinking. The second subcategory of Student Engaged Learning is Student Learning Conversations, which refers to conversations that may have been teacher stimulated, but are not teacher-led, which construct knowledge and involve higher order thinking. The second broad category is Teacher Directed Instruction. The first subcategory is Teacher-Led Instruction, which describes instruction such as lectures, teachers giving directions, or video instruction. The second subcategory is Student Work with Teacher Engaged, which describes students doing bookwork, worksheets, or tests where teacher support is evident. The third broad category is Disengagement. One subcategory is Student Work with Teacher Not Engaged, which refers to students completing worksheets, bookwork or tests without teacher support. And the last subcategory is Complete Disengagement,

which refers to students who are off task or not engaged in learning the curriculum in any way (Valentine, 2005).

The data collected are used to create a school profile that is to be studied collaboratively by the staff. In this model, teacher-leaders are the ones most likely to collect data, with administrators collecting data only occasionally. Observations are typically 1-3 minutes long, with at least 100 observations occurring during a typical observation day. It is recommend that the staff be informed several days before data will be collected and that data collection should be on Mondays through Thursdays if teachers believe that collection on Fridays will compromised the validity of the data. The observer does not identify individual teachers in the data collection; instead, results are presented as school-wide data.

Limited research exists linking the practice of classroom walkthroughs, teacher improvement and increased student achievement. This is true of the general literature on the walkthrough process and literature regarding the specific models mentioned in this section. Kachur et al. (2010) reports that the extant research is primarily case studies, surveys and action research that examine the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the practice of classroom walkthroughs. Several studies of instructional leadership practices indicate that classroom walkthroughs increase the principal's awareness of what instructional decisions are being made in the classroom as well as what professional development is needed, thus impacting achievement (Strong, Richard & Catano, 2008). Classroom walkthroughs have also been found to contribute to the development of professional learning communities; this has been found to increase student achievement (Hord & Sommers, 2008).

There are numerous additional reported benefits of conducting classroom walkthroughs. According to Protheroe (2009), when principals conduct classroom walkthroughs, “students see that both administrators and teachers value instruction and learning” (p. 30). Pawlas (2005) explains that visibility is a way to build relationships with teachers, students and parents. Pawlas suggests that administrators spend time where students and teachers are in order to increase visibility and accessibility. He states that this will give administrators opportunities to have informal conversations with teachers and students and get to know them on a more personal level. Fiore (2006) further expresses the importance of administrator visibility. He explains that in order to be role models and to effectively and purposefully communicate their vision, administrators should be visible to stakeholders. He also expresses that it is not enough for administrators to have an open-door policy, but that they need to leave their offices and be visible to be accessible. Fiore explains that administrator visibility is essential in building school and community relationships. Additionally, studies have shown that school administrators’ visibility is positively related to improved discipline and students’ acceptance of advice (Blase, 1987; Smith & Blase, 1991).

Classroom walkthroughs strengthen the principal as an instructional leader by providing increased familiarity with the school’s curriculum and teachers’ instructional practices. Research has shown that as the frequency of classroom visits increases, so does the teachers’ perception of the effectiveness of the principal (Valentine, Clark, Nickerson & Keefe, 1981; Andrews & Soder, 1987; Smith & Blase, 1991; Sagor, 1992).

Clearly, high quality instruction results in higher levels of student achievement (Marzano, 2010; Tileston, 2000). In a meta-analysis of research conducted by

Midcontinent Research of Education and Learning (McREL) on instructional strategies that have a high probability of positively affecting student achievement, nine instructional strategies were identified that, if integrated into classroom instruction, will help increase student proficiency and deepen understanding (Marzano et al., 2001):

- Identifying similarities and differences;
- Summarizing and note taking;
- Reinforcing effort and providing recognition;
- Homework and practice;
- The use of nonlinguistic representations;
- Cooperative learning;
- Setting objectives and providing feedback; and
- Generating and testing hypothesis.

Effective school leaders support these instructional practices by monitoring classroom instruction, utilizing data and modeling effective leading and learning, which in turn help schools reach their student achievement goals (Catano, Richard & Stronge, 2008).

Frequent classroom visits by school administrators have been shown to positively relate to improved instruction (Teddle, Kirby, & Stringfield, 1989).

In research conducted by Warner (2010), a purposeful sample of 20 principals were interviewed regarding their views and ideas of their roles and responsibilities. Without being given a formal definition of instructional leadership, the principals were asked to provide a definition in their own words. Warner identified behaviors principals associated with the term instructional leadership. One behavior identified was being visible by visiting classrooms to observe instruction and stay connected to classroom

practices. The principals in this study reported that being visible builds respect among the staff and gives principals a knowledge base from which to speak with parents, students and teachers about instruction in the classroom. This study also noted that being visible or present in the classroom led to conversations between the principal and teachers about instruction. These conversations were informal or in the form of planned conferences with the principal. Another report noted that walkthroughs in isolation are insufficient; it is the conversations about instruction that occurred as the result of classroom walkthroughs that lead to improved instructional capacity (Salter & Walker, 2008).

Kachur et al. (2010) explains that an additional role that classroom walkthroughs play is in developing community and school relationships. According to Kachur, classroom walkthroughs promote the development of a professional learning community. Professional learning communities engage teaching professionals in meaningful discussions and reflection about teaching and learning. Ginsberg and Murphy (2002) suggest that classroom walkthroughs increase team atmosphere as administrators and teachers work together. They further suggest that classroom walkthroughs foster reflective, collaborative adult learning. Classroom walkthroughs provide a springboard for productive and detailed conversations about improving instruction. When principals spend more time in classrooms, teachers have a higher regard for professional development efforts (Frase, 2001). In professional learning communities, teachers and administrators share the responsibility of monitoring classroom instruction as well as making decisions about student learning. Professional learning communities also promote dialogue about instruction that facilitates opportunities for teachers to give and

receive feedback and learn from one another. Professional learning communities help to reduce teacher isolation and unite the staff in working towards a common goal.

Before implementing classroom walkthroughs as a means of improving classroom instruction, principals should be sure that they have clearly communicated the purpose of the walkthroughs to the teachers. Kachur et al. (2010) suggests that when facilitating adult learning through classroom walkthroughs, it is critical to have a conversation following the walkthrough to help teachers identify areas in which they need improvement. Allowing teachers to have input on what will be monitored during walkthroughs gives teachers a sense of involvement in their professional growth. Kachur et al. further explain that principals should look for opportunities to connect walkthrough observations to real-life instructional opportunities. This will make professional learning immediate and relevant to the teacher. Feedback from walkthroughs can be a motivator for teachers to improve their instructional practice. Frase (2001) found that the frequency of classroom visits conducted by the principal predicted the job satisfaction of teachers. Classroom walkthroughs break the feeling of isolation and give principals an opportunity to observe what obstacles need to be removed to allow teachers to do their best, thus increasing job satisfaction (Downey et al., 2004).

Rossi (2007) utilized the classroom walkthrough process developed by Graf and Werlinich as the foundation for dissertation research. Rossi reports the following positive impacts of the Graf and Werlinich walkthrough process on classroom instruction:

- Teacher sharing of best practices;
- Increased principal awareness of what is happening in the classrooms;

- Increase in teacher time on task;
- Better principal understanding of curriculum gaps and inconsistencies;
- Better understanding of professional development needs;
- Improvement in the quality of student work;
- Improved conversation about quality of instruction;
- Development of a common language around instruction; and
- Teacher evaluation focused on student learning.

Additionally, administrators can utilize classroom walkthroughs to become more knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction, and design staff development based on their classroom observations. As administrator's roles are becoming more focused on instruction, school leaders are seeking ways to engage teachers in collaborative and reflective discussions about improving instruction. Classroom walkthroughs are both a visible symbol of a principal's commitment to improving instruction and method in doing so (Johnston, 2003).

Summary

Increased accountability for academic achievement has increased the demand for principals to act as instructional leaders. Principals who are instructional leaders are involved in all levels of instruction in their schools. This involvement includes frequent classroom visits, monitoring of instruction, and subsequent feedback for teachers. National and state standards have been designed to guide the role of principal as instructional leader. Conducting classroom walkthroughs is one strategy instructional leaders can implement to impact student achievement by monitoring instruction and gathering data for teacher feedback.

Increased accountability has also caused administrators to begin looking at teacher effectiveness as part of a teacher's annual evaluations. Research has shown that a teacher's effectiveness has a significant effect on a student's ability to obtain academic success. With the implementation of the Race to the Top program, many states are seeking to reform their teacher evaluations to include measures of teacher effectiveness.

Not only do classroom walkthroughs increase a principal's visibility in the building and allow him or her to become more knowledgeable about the instructional decisions being made in classrooms, they allow the principal to take many snapshots of a teacher's instructional practices that can be used to formulate a more comprehensive assessment of a teacher's effectiveness. Data gathered through classroom walkthroughs can also be used to monitor the implementation of professional learning and to gauge future professional learning needs.

In Chapter II the researcher has reviewed research and literature relevant to the study. The methodology of the study will be presented in Chapter III, which will include a description of the research questions, research design, sampling, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify relationships among principals' perceived importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs relative to other administrative duties, as well as principals' perceived importance of the classroom walkthrough design; it further explored the relationships among perceptions about classroom walkthroughs and student achievement, school performance levels, and the socio-economic status of the school. Chapter III describes the following: a) research questions and hypotheses, b) research design, c) participants, d) data collection, e) instrumentation, and f) data analysis.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study investigated whether specific classroom walkthrough practices, and principals' perceived importance thereof, are related to school socio-economics, school academic performance, and student academic achievement. More specifically, the researcher answered the following questions:

1. Is there a relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other duties and the SES status of the school?
2. Is there a relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other duties and the academic performance level of the school?
3. Is there a relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other duties and growth

in student achievement?

4. Is there a relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of the classroom walkthrough design and the SES status of the school?
5. Is there a relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of the classroom walkthrough design and the academic performance level of the school?
6. Is there a relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of the classroom walkthrough design and growth in student achievement?

Because the literature provides little empirical evidence of the relationships among the practice of classroom walkthroughs and the other variables identified in the research questions, the hypotheses were not stated as directional hypotheses. The null hypotheses for the research questions are stated below:

1. There will be no relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other duties and the SES status of the school.
2. There will be no relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs and the academic performance level of the school.
3. There will be no relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs and the growth in student achievement.

4. There will be no relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of specific classroom walkthrough design elements and the SES status of the school.
5. There will be no relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of specific classroom walkthrough design elements and the academic performance level of the school.
6. There will be no relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of specific classroom walkthrough design elements and the growth in student achievement.

Research Design

This study had a quasi-experimental research design, which is commonly used when random assignment is not possible or practical. The researcher utilized survey methodology, archival data and quantitative statistical analyses to identify the relationships among principals' perceptions of the importance of specific classroom walkthrough practices and various markers of school demographics and performance, including eligibility for free or reduced price meals, school ranking, and student achievement. Quantitative studies utilize data that can be expressed numerically and analyzed using mathematically based methods (Muijs, 2004). They rely on precise measurement of observable or inferred behavior, and typically are used to explain, not just describe, phenomena via analysis of hypotheses. Correlational analyses are used to identify statistical relationships among variables, not to prove causation. They examine the relationship between two or more variables measured as they exist at a single point in time, and no attempt is made by the researcher to manipulate the data or to control either

variable. In contrast to the experimental design, studies with a quasi-experimental design have little or no control over the allocation of the treatments or other factors being studied. Survey methodology is an efficient way of gathering large amounts of quantifiable data from large groups of people. Survey instruments often are used to collect opinions, perceptions and attitudes as they exist in the population of interest (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005).

A qualitative design was not chosen for this study because all data that are collected will be quantified and used to identify relationships among variables. A qualitative design, which emphasizes the use of perceptions of individuals to derive meaning and understanding in naturally occurring situations, would be inappropriate for this study as would an experimental design, in which a treatment is administered to an experimental group and evaluated in comparison to a control group. This study did not utilize data that could be manipulated, but rather used to identify correlations among specific variables. Data for some variables used in this study were archival, while data for other variables were obtained through a survey instrument designed by the researcher to identify principals' perceptions of the practice of classroom walkthroughs and to quantify those perceptions.

Participants

The participants in this study were identified through a convenience sample of elementary school principals from three large metro-area school districts that included both metropolitan and suburban communities. The researcher sought the participation of elementary school principals who conducted classroom walkthroughs as well as those who did not. Data collected from both categories of principals provided information

about the practice, or lack thereof, of conducting classroom walkthroughs. The first school district had a total enrollment of 158,438 students in 118 schools. Eighty-three of the schools were elementary schools, and 10 of the 118 schools did not make AYP for the 2009-2010 school year. Fifty percent of the students enrolled in this district were eligible for free or reduced price meals. The second largest district had a total student enrollment of 106,574 and 114 schools. Seventy-two were elementary schools. Twelve of the 144 schools in this district did not meet AYP for the 2009-2010 school year. Forty-one percent of the students in this district were eligible for free or reduced price meals. The third school district had a total enrollment of 96,678 students in 133 schools. Eighty-nine of the schools in this district were elementary schools. Fifty of the 133 schools in this district did not meet AYP for the 2009-2010 school year and 69% of students enrolled were eligible for free or reduced price meals (Georgia Department of Education, 2011). Altogether, 195 elementary school principals were asked to complete the survey after schools without fourth or fifth grade students, schools that opened in 2010 and schools with newly appointed principals were eliminated. The researcher anticipated at least a 50% return rate for the surveys.

Instrumentation

The primary instrument used for data collection was a survey created and piloted by the researcher (Appendix A). The survey consisted of 52 questions that were grouped into four domains: 1) principal demographics (items A: 1-6); 2) importance of the practice of walkthroughs in completing administrative duties (items B: 1-12); 3) importance of the walkthrough design (items C: 1-13); and 4) importance of walkthroughs in relation to other administrative duties (items D: 1-12). Questions in all

of the domains except principal demographics utilized a 5-point Likert response format and identified how important principals perceive classroom walkthrough to be in the completion of administrative duties, how important principals perceive specific walkthrough design elements to be, and how important walkthroughs are in relation to other administrative duties.

The demographics section of the survey (section A) gathered information about the principals such as gender, the number of years the principal had been in their current school, the number of years of administrative experience of the principal, whether or not the principal had professional development in the practice of classroom walkthroughs, and the number of years classroom walkthroughs had been used in the school. The second section of the survey instrument identified the level of importance principals place on the practice of classroom walkthrough in the completion of other duties and in the subdomains of: instruction (items B: 1-3); planning and organization (items B: 4-6); professional learning (items B: 7-9); and leadership (items B: 10-12). The third section of the survey instrument identified the importance principals placed on elements of the classroom walkthrough design and in the following subdomains: walkthrough planning (items C: 1-4); walkthrough observations (items C: 5-9); and post-walkthrough procedures (items C: 10-13). The last section of the survey identified the level of importance principals place on classroom walkthroughs in relation to other administrative duties and in the subdomains of: leadership (items D: 4-6); professional learning (items D: 7-9); assessment (items D: 10-12); and student, family and community (items D: 1-3).

The survey instrument was piloted by a group of twelve administrators who were certified in grades K–6 and were familiar with the practice of classroom walkthroughs.

The pilot group was asked to provide feedback on the clarity of the items, the response format, the specific wording used, and the time needed to complete the study. The survey instrument was also reviewed by a panel of experts to ensure that each question measured only a single item and that it was stated clearly.

Using the pilot survey results, the internal consistency of the survey instrument was analyzed by computing Cronbach's alpha for each domain and subdomain. The internal consistency was also analyzed for the survey instrument as a whole. For the twelve items in the domain that measured the level of importance placed on walkthroughs in completing administrative duties, Cronbach's alpha showed a high level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .95$) and each subdomain also showed acceptable levels of internal consistency: instruction ($\alpha = .96$), planning and organization ($\alpha = .86$), professional learning ($\alpha = .93$), and leadership ($\alpha = .92$). For the thirteen items in the domain that measured the importance principals place on the classroom walkthrough design, Cronbach's alpha showed an acceptable level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$). Each subdomain showed acceptable internal consistency: classroom walkthrough planning ($\alpha = .78$), walkthrough observations ($\alpha = .89$) and post classroom walkthrough practices ($\alpha = .94$). For the twelve items in the domain that measured the importance principals place on the practice of classroom walkthroughs relative to other duties, Cronbach's alpha showed an acceptable level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .98$), as did each subdomain, including leadership ($\alpha = .92$), professional learning ($\alpha = .85$), assessment ($\alpha = .98$), student, family, and community relations ($\alpha = .98$). The overall Cronbach's alpha showed a high level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .98$). The results for the analysis of internal consistency in the fully implemented study are reported in Chapter IV.

The survey instrument was modified based on the feedback from the panel of experts and pilot sample in order to enhance the construct validity of the instrument. The pilot study assisted the researcher in determining if the final study participants would be able to understand the questions and whether their perceptions of the questions would reflect accurately the researcher's intent.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher began the data collection process by obtaining authorization to conduct the study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix B) of the University of Southern Mississippi and from each of the participating school districts. Once authorization was obtained, a survey was mailed to each of the principals included in the sample. The initial page of the survey included a letter that explained the informed consent process and enabled participants to agree or disagree to participate in the study. The letter of informed consent also explained the purpose of the study, description, and procedures. The participants were informed that the survey may take up to 15 minutes to complete. The statement also explained that the research is completely voluntary and could be discontinued at any point. Participants were assured that in no way would they or their schools be identified in the final report and that all responses were completely confidential. A follow up email reminding participants to return the survey was sent two weeks after surveys were mailed. Survey data collection took place in July and August of 2011. Participants were asked to return the completed surveys to the researcher using the included self-addressed, stamped envelope by August 5, 2011. The archival data were collected from the aforementioned publicly accessible websites during the month of August, 2011.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the survey instrument and from the Georgia Department of Education were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Pearson product-moment correlation and hierarchal multiple regression. Pearson correlations examine the relationship between two variables where each variable is continuous in nature. Hierarchal multiple regressions are used to predict a single variable from one or more of the other variables added in stages. SSPS was used by the researcher to determine the statistical relationship between principals' perceptions of the level of importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs, as well as principals' perceived level of importance of specific walkthrough design elements, and the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price meals, the change in scores from 2010 4th grade CRCT mathematics scores and 2011 5th grade CRCT mathematics scores, and the academic performance level of the school (operationalized by the AYP) status). The principals' perceptions of the level of importance of the practice of conducting classroom walkthroughs and of the importance of specific walkthroughs design elements were determined by calculating the means of their responses on a 5-point Likert scale corresponding to both of these categories.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify relationships among principals' perceived importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs, as well as principals' perceived importance of the classroom walkthrough design, and socio-economic status (SES), academic performance level of schools (AYP), and student achievement on the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test. Data was collected through a survey

instrument that was created and piloted by the researcher, as well as from publicly accessible internet databases. The survey instrument collected data regarding principals' demographic characteristics, specific classroom walkthrough practices utilized in the schools, and the principals' perceptions of the importance of classroom walkthrough practices. One hundred ninety-five elementary school principals from three large, metro-area school districts in the state of Georgia were asked to participate in the survey. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations and hierarchical multiple regression.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

High-stakes educational reforms such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top charge school administrators with the enormous task of ensuring teacher effectiveness while increasing student achievement. For these reasons, examining the extent to which principals perceive that classroom walkthroughs are an important and effective method of teacher supervision, monitoring instruction, and increasing student achievement is relevant. This study examined the level of importance that principals place on the practice of classroom walkthroughs and on elements of classroom walkthrough design; it further explored the relationships among perceptions about classroom walkthroughs and student achievement, school performance levels (AYP), and socio-economic status (SES) of the school.

Description of the Respondents

The participants in this study were elementary school principals from three large school districts in a metropolitan area in the state of Georgia. Of the 195 surveys mailed to principals regarding their perceptions of the importance of classroom walkthroughs, 62 (31.8%) were completed and returned to the researcher. Three participants were excluded from final analysis because they did not provide the names of their schools, which were necessary for correlational analyses. Descriptive statistics were computed on participant demographic variables, which included years as principal in current school, years of administrative experience, years of classroom experience, total years as an educator, age, gender, and level of education. As shown in Table 1, the majority (81.7%) of the participants were female. Participants ranged in age from 34 to 64 ($M = 50.73$, SD

= 8.11) and 76.7% of participants held a specialist's degree or higher. Administrative experience was quite variable for this sample, with experience ranging from 4 to 27 years ($M = 11.07$, $SD = 4.91$). Participants reported being the principal in their current school an average of 3.77 years ($SD = 4.83$).

Table 1

Participant Demographics

	Years of Experience and Age					
	n	Min.	Max.	M	SD	Skew/Std. Error
Yrs. Principal in Current School	60	1	11	3.77	4.83	2.1909*
Yrs. Administrative Experience	59	4	27	11.07	4.91	3.1286*
Yrs. Classroom Experience	57	0	25	11.04	6.56	1.8227
Total Yrs. as an Educator	59	10	40	24.64	5.60	0.3055
Age	56	34	64	50.73	8.11	-0.3260
	n		Percent			
Gender						
Female	49		81.7			
Male	11		18.3			
Education						
Masters	14		23.3			
Specialists	27		45.0			
Doctorate	19		31.7			

*significant skew at $\alpha < .05$

School and Student Demographics

Each participant was asked to provide the name of his/her school on the survey instrument and was informed that the purpose was to allow the researcher to collect aggregate student achievement and school demographic data from the Georgia Department of Education web site, as well as the web sites of the participating school

districts. Participants were informed that the name of their schools would not be included in any of the final summary reports. Descriptive data were collected on the schools' socio-economic status, school performance and student achievement. These data are presented in Tables 2 and 3. The mean percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price meals (SES) was 46.7%, with a range from 3% to 96%. The majority of schools in this study (78.3%, $N = 47$) had a distinguished AYP status. Only one school in the study had an AYP status of Needs Improvement. The average percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the 2010 4th grade CRCT mathematics section was 82.17% ($SD = 12.66$) and the mean was 90.28% ($SD = 9.32$) for the 2011 5th grade CRCT mathematics section. The difference in CRCT math scores from 4th to 5th grade ranged from -2% to 26% change.

Table 2

School Socio-economic Status (SES)

	n	Min.	Max.	M	SD	Skew/Std. Error
Percentage of students receiving free or reduced priced meals	54	3	96	46.70	32.12	0.32

Table 3

School and Student Academic Performance

	AYP Status	
	n	Percent
Distinguished	47	78.3
Adequate	1	1.7
Did Not Meet	8	13.3
Needs Improvement	1	1.7

Table 3 (continued).

	Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding on the Mathematics Section of the CRCT					
	n	Min.	Max.	M	SD	Skew/Std. Error
Fourth grade 2010 CRCT math scores	54	38	97	82.17	12.66	-4.05
Fifth grade 2011 CRCT math scores	57	61	100	90.28	9.32	-4.69
Math score difference	54	-2	26	8.23	6.56	3.39

Participants' Experiences with Classroom Walkthroughs

Additional information was gathered in order to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences with classroom walkthroughs; these results are presented in Tables 4 and 5. This information included whether the practice of conducting classroom walkthroughs was mandated in their district, the extent of walkthrough implementation, the extent of professional learning about classroom walkthroughs, and alignment of classroom walkthroughs to the school improvement plan, teacher evaluation instrument and professional development. The majority (55.0%) of participants reported that the practice of classroom walkthroughs was mandated in their school district. Regarding responsibility for these observations, 93.3% of participants reported that the principal was responsible for conducting classroom walkthroughs in their school, 91.7% reported that the assistant principal was responsible for conducting classroom walkthroughs. Further, 28.6% reported conducting more than 200 classroom walkthroughs each school year. In regards to walkthrough training, 58.3% of participants reported that they had read four or more articles and/or books about classroom walkthroughs. 28% of respondents reported having attended four or more classes and/or workshops about classroom walkthroughs.

Forty-seven percent of participants reported that their classroom walkthrough practices were mostly aligned to their school improvement plans, 46.7% reported that classroom walkthrough practices were mostly aligned to their professional development and 40.0 % reported that classroom walkthroughs were mostly aligned to their teacher evaluation instrument.

Table 4

Participants' Experience with Classroom Walkthroughs

	n	Percent
Mandated in District	33	55.0
Conducted in School	55	91.7
Conducted by Principal	56	93.3
Conducted by Asst. Principal	55	91.7
Conducted by Teachers	21	35.0
Conducted by Counselors	11	18.3
Conducted by Academic Coaches	27	45.0
Number of Walkthroughs Conducted Each Year		
<50	5	8.3
50-100	14	23.3
100-150	11	18.3
150-200	10	16.7
>200	16	28.6
Articles or Books Read		
1-2	6	10.0
3-4	18	30.0
More than 4	35	58.3
Classes or Workshops Attended		
1-2	16	26.7
3-4	21	35.0
More than 4	23	28.3

Table 5

Alignment of Classroom Walkthroughs

	Percent			
	Not Aligned	Somewhat Aligned	Mostly Aligned	Completely Aligned
School Improvement Plan	3.3	20.0	46.7	23.3
Professional Development	1.7	23.3	46.7	21.7
Teacher Evaluation Instrument	6.7	23.3	40.0	21.7

Reliability of the Instrument

The primary data collection instrument was a survey created by the researcher. The survey consisted of 52 questions organized into a demographic section and three walkthrough domains. The demographic section consisted of 16 (items A: 1-16) questions that gathered information about the participants as well as information about their experiences with the practice of classroom walkthroughs (reported above). The three walkthrough domains were designed using the language of the Georgia School Keys and asked participants to rate the importance of the classroom walkthroughs using a five-point Likert scale. The Georgia School Keys are a set of professional guidelines for teachers and school leaders. The domain that assessed the importance of classroom walkthroughs in completing administrative duties included the following subdomains: instruction (items B: 1-3); planning and organization (items B: 4-6); professional learning (items B: 7-9); and leadership (items B: 10-12). The domain that assessed the importance of the classroom walkthrough design included the following subdomains: walkthrough planning (items C: 1-4); walkthrough observations (items C: 5-9); and post-walkthrough practices (items C: 10-13). The domain that assessed the importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs relative to other administrative duties included the following

subdomains: leadership (items D: 4-6); professional learning (items D: 7-9); assessment, and student, family, and community relations (items D: 1-3).

Tests of internal consistency were conducted for the overall survey instrument and for the items under each subdomain. For the twelve items in the domain that assessed the importance of classroom walkthroughs in completing administrative duties, Cronbach's alpha showed a high level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$) and each subdomain also showed acceptable levels of internal consistency: instruction ($\alpha = .91$), planning and organization ($\alpha = .80$), professional learning ($\alpha = .88$), and leadership ($\alpha = .77$). For the thirteen items in the domain that assessed the importance of the classroom walkthrough design, Cronbach's alpha showed an acceptable level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .77$), and the subdomains of walkthrough observations ($\alpha = .86$). However, Cronbach's alpha was low for post-walkthrough practices ($\alpha = .50$) and classroom walkthrough planning ($\alpha = .31$). For the twelve items in the domain that assessed the importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs relative to other administrative duties, Cronbach's alpha showed a high level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .96$), as did each subdomain including leadership ($\alpha = .84$), professional learning ($\alpha = .89$), assessment ($\alpha = .97$), student, family, and community relations ($\alpha = .94$). When all survey items were analyzed for an overall Cronbach's alpha, the survey instrument showed a high level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .95$).

According to Cortina (1993) Cronbach's alpha is a lower bound of reliability and changes as a function of the number of items. Since the subdomains of the survey instrument contained only 3-4 items, often resulting in a lower Cronbach's alpha, item-total correlations were computed to further test the reliability of the instrument. All

survey items were found to be correlated ($p = .05$) to the domain in which they were included and more highly correlated with their parent domain than with the other domains with the exception of one survey item, as is shown in Table 6. The survey item- length of time spent in walkthroughs- did not correlate significantly with the parent domain and was eliminated from final analyses.

Table 6

Item-Total Correlations of Survey Items and Parent Domains

The Importance of Walkthrough in Completing Administrative Duties	The Importance of Walkthroughs in Completing Admin. Duties	The Importance of the Walkthrough Design	The Importance of Walkthroughs Relative to Other Admin. Duties
1. Monitoring the implementation of standards-based instruction	.77**	.50**	.50**
2. Monitoring the use of differentiated instruction	.78**	.47**	.34*
3. Monitoring the use of higher-order thinking skills in instruction	.72**	.60**	.44**
4. Monitoring the implementation of the school improvement plan and its impact upon student achievement	.81**	.53**	.45**
5. Maintaining a safe, orderly and inviting learning community	.62**	.34**	.34**
6. Emphasizing the value of student engagement in the learning process	.74**	.45**	.42**
7. Monitoring the impact of professional learning on school improvement goals	.76**	.42**	.56**

Table 6 (continued).

The Importance of Walkthroughs in Completing Administrative Duties	The Importance of Walkthroughs in Completing Admin. Duties	The Importance of the Walkthrough Design	The Importance of Walkthroughs Relative to other Admin. Duties
8. Collecting and analyzing relevant student and teacher data to monitor and revise school and classroom improvement strategies	.70**	.42**	.58**
9. Monitoring the impact of professional learning	.78**	.40**	.43**
10. Maintaining a visible and sustained role of instructional leader	.60**	.33*	.29*
11. Providing supervision for curriculum, assessment and instruction	.69**	.37**	.26
12. Ensuring that the school improvement plan is fully operational and reinforces a sustained process of continuous improvement	.78**	.53**	.60**
The Importance of the Walkthrough Design	The Importance of Walkthroughs in Completing Admin. Duties	The Importance of the Walkthrough Design	The Importance of Walkthroughs Relative to Other Admin. Duties
1. The length of time spent in classrooms during walkthroughs	-.01	.15	.01
2. Administrators conducting classroom walkthroughs	.34**	.50**	.31*
3. Teachers conducting classroom walkthroughs	.28*	.30*	.13
4. The frequency of classroom walkthroughs throughout the school year	.29*	.33*	.35*

Table 6 (continued).

The Importance of the Walkthrough Design	The Importance of Walkthroughs in Completing Admin. Duties	The Importance of the Walkthrough Design	The Importance of Walkthroughs Relative to Other Admin. Duties
9. Providing walkthrough feedback to whole staff	.15	.38**	.28*
10. Monitoring student engagement	.63**	.62**	.43**
11. Monitoring alignment of instruction to the state standards	.58**	.54**	.47**
12. Assessing the students' understanding of the learning objectives	.64**	.47**	.40**
13. Monitoring the use of differentiated instruction	.76**	.52**	.42**
The Importance of Walkthroughs Relative to Other Administrative Duties	The Importance of Walkthroughs in Completing Admin. Duties	The Importance of the Walkthrough Design	The Importance of Walkthroughs Relative to Other Admin. Duties
1. Ensuring parents and community members feel welcomed in your school	.55**	.49**	.76**
2. Maintaining consistent communication between school, parent and community members	.48**	.47**	.82**
3. Encouraging student, family and community involvement	.53**	.44**	.75**
4. Conducting teacher evaluations	.42**	.37**	.69**
5. Hiring and retaining quality teachers	.45**	.33**	.83**

Table 6 (continued).

The Importance of Walkthroughs Relative to Other Administrative Duties	The Importance of Walkthroughs in Completing Admin. Duties	The Importance of the Walkthrough Design	The Importance of Walkthroughs Relative to Other Admin. Duties
6. Maintaining a collegial working environment	.457**	.465**	.808**
7. Facilitating remediation for marginal teachers	.34**	.40**	.71**
8. Planning high-quality professional learning	.54**	.49**	.84**
9. Creating and maintaining a collaborative learning community	.57**	.52**	.88**
10. Analyzing student performance data	.52**	.41**	.93**
11. Designing student interventions based on data analysis	.50**	.35**	.92**
12. Using student performance data to adjust instruction	.42**	.40**	.85**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Results

Descriptive Statistics: Principal Perceptions

This quantitative study was conducted to determine if there were relationships between principals' perceptions of the importance of classroom walkthroughs and a) socio-economic status (SES), b) annual yearly progress (AYP), and c) student achievement; the study further addressed relationships between classroom walkthrough variable subdomains and d) SES, e) AYP, and f) student achievement. Survey responses indicated that principals perceived all walkthrough parent domains and subdomains to be in the moderately important or important range; these results are presented in Table 7.

The highest rated parent domain was that of the importance of walkthroughs in completing administrative duties, Section A ($M = 4.37$, $SD = .58$). Each subgroup in this section also had mean scores in the important range. The parent domain of the importance of the walkthrough design, Section B, had the second highest rating, ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .77$). The ratings in the subgroups in Section B were variable, with walkthrough planning rated as moderately important, and walkthrough observations and post-walkthrough practices rated as important. The parent domain, importance of walkthroughs relative to other duties (Section C), had the lowest rating ($M = 3.85$, $SD = .77$). All subdomains in Section C were also rated as moderately important.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Survey Instrument Parent Domains and Subdomains

	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Importance of Walkthroughs in Completing Administrative Duties (Survey Section B)	58	4.37	.58
Instructional Duties (items B: 1-3)	58	4.49	.60
Planning and Organization Duties (items B: 4-6)	58	4.44	.63
Professional Learning Duties (items B: 7-9)	58	4.07	.78
Leadership Duties (items B: 10-12)	58	4.48	.61
Importance of Walkthrough Design (Survey Section C)	58	3.89	.77
Walkthrough Planning (items C: 1-4)	58	3.99	.41
Walkthrough Observation (items C: 6-9)	58	4.47	.59
Post-walkthrough Practices (items C: 10-13)	58	4.24	.51
Importance of Walkthroughs Relative to Other Duties (Survey Section D)	59	3.85	.77
Leadership Duties (items D: 4-6)	59	3.84	.84
Professional Learning Duties (items D: 7-9)	59	3.97	.85
Assessment Duties (items D: 10-12)	59	3.77	.94
Student, Family, Community Duties (items D: 1-3)	59	3.81	.72

Note: Means were calculated using Likert scale responses where 1 = unimportant, 2 = of little importance, 3 = moderately important, 4 = important, 5 = very important.

Results from Analyses Associated with the Hypotheses

Pearson's correlations among school SES and performance (AYP, and the difference in 2010 4th and 2011 5th grade CRCT math scores) are presented in Table 8. SES was determined by the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price meals, and AYP was determined by the schools' state ranking of either distinguished, adequate, did not meet, or needs improvement. Results indicated that SES was significantly correlated with AYP, $r(54) = .42, p = .01$, and with math score differences, $r(54) = .40, p = .01$. Because SES is correlated with AYP and math score differences, SES is a covariate in subsequent analyses relating walkthrough variables to achievement variables.

Table 8

Correlations among SES and School Performance

	AYP	Math Score Difference
SES	.42**	.40**
AYP		.23

** $p = .01$

Pearson's correlations among the three walkthrough domains (overall importance of classroom walkthroughs in completing administrative duties, overall importance of classroom walkthrough design, and overall importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other administrative duties) are presented in Table 9. As can be seen in Table 9, all of the walkthrough domains were moderately correlated.

Table 9

Correlations among Walkthrough Domains

	Importance of Walkthroughs in Completing Admin. Duties	Importance of Walkthroughs Relative to Admin. Duties
Importance of Walkthrough Design	.51**	.48**
Importance of Walkthroughs in Completing Admin. Duties		.58**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Correlations between school SES, performance variables (AYP, math score difference) and classroom walkthrough variables are presented in Table 10. None of the correlations were significant. The simple correlation between SES and walkthrough importance variables indicated no relationship; these findings addressed Hypothesis 1 relating SES to walkthrough variables.

Table 10

Correlations between Classroom Walkthrough Variables and Markers of School Demographics and Performance

	SES	AYP	Math Score Difference
Importance of Walkthrough Design	.09	.10	-.15
Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Admin. Duties	.08	-.01	.12
Importance of Walkthroughs in Completion of Admin. Duties	.00	-.02	-.07

Pearson's correlations among the subdomains of each walkthrough domain were calculated. For the walkthrough domain that assessed the overall importance of classroom walkthroughs in completing administrative duties, correlations were calculated for the subdomains of instruction, planning and organization, professional learning and

leadership and are presented in Table 11. All subdomains were moderately correlated within the parent domain.

Table 11

Correlations among the Subdomains of the Importance of Classroom Walkthroughs in Completing Administrative Duties

	Planning and Organization Duties	Professional Learning Duties	Leadership Duties
Instructional Duties	.799**	.647**	.696**
Planning and Organization Duties		.709**	.756**
Professional Learning Duties			.736**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

For the walkthrough domain that assessed the importance of the classroom walkthrough design, correlations were calculated for the subdomains of classroom walkthrough through planning, observations, and post-walkthrough practices and are presented in Table 12. The importance of walkthrough planning was moderately correlated with the importance of the walkthrough observation and the importance of post-walkthrough practices.

Table 12

Correlations among the Subdomains of the Importance of the Walkthrough Design

	Importance of Walkthrough Observation	Importance of Post-walkthrough Practices
Importance of Walkthrough Planning	.469**	.454**
Importance of Walkthrough Observation		.248

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

For the walkthrough domain that assessed the importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs relative to other administrative duties, correlations were calculated for the subdomains of leadership, professional learning, assessment, and student, family, and community relations and are presented in Table 11. All subdomains were moderately correlated within the parent domain.

Table 13

Correlations among the Subdomains of the Relative Importance of Walkthroughs

	Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Prof. Learning Duties	Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Assessment Duties	Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Student, Family and Community Duties
Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Leadership Duties	.833**	.860**	.745**
Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Prof. Learning Duties		.869**	.698**
Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Assessment Duties			.734**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

In order to further address Hypotheses 1, regarding the relative importance of walkthroughs and SES, simple correlations were calculated between SES and the subdomains of leadership duties, professional learning duties, assessment duties and student, family and community relation duties. There were no significant correlations. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis, which asserted that there would be no significant relationship between SES and the importance principals place on the practice of classroom walkthroughs. Results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Correlation between the SES and the Relative Importance of Classroom Walkthrough

	Leadership Duties	Professional Learning Duties	Assessment Duties	Student, Family, and Community Duties
SES	.06	.10	.12	-.03

In order to address research Hypothesis 2, regarding the relationship between the relative importance of walkthroughs and AYP, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted; the results are presented in Table 15. SES was entered first as a control variable and walkthrough variables were entered second. Results from the regression analysis revealed that SES significantly predicted AYP, ($R^2 = .18$, $F(1, 52) = 11.33$, $p < .001$). However, the addition of the walkthrough variables in step 2 did not produce a significant change in proportion of explained variance in AYP ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $\Delta F(4, 48) = .12$, $p = .98$). The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis, which asserted that there would be no relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs and the academic performance level of the school.

Table 15

Hierarchical Regression of Principals' Perceptions of the Practice of Classroom Walkthroughs Relative to other Administrative Duties and AYP (Controlling for SES)

Step 1	AYP $R^2 = .18$, $F(1, 52) = 11.33$, $p < .001$				
	b	t	p	pr ²	sr ²
Y intercept	.82	4.72	.00		
SES	.01	3.37	.001	.18	.18

Table 15 (continued).

Step 2	AYP $\Delta R^2 = .01,$ $\Delta F(4, 48) = .12, p = .98$ Overall $R^2 = .19,$ $F(5, 48) = 2.21, p = .07$				
	b	t	p	pr ²	sr ²
Y intercept	1.01	1.74	.09		
SES	.01	3.14	.003	.17	.17
Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Leadership Duties	.05	.20	.84	.0008	.0007
Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Prof. Learning Duties	-.16	-.65	.65	.009	.007
Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Assessment Duties	.11	.40	.40	.003	.003
Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Student, Family and Community Relation Duties	-.04	-.19	.85	.0007	.0006

In order to address research Hypothesis 3, concerning the relationship between walkthrough variables and math score differences, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted. SES was entered in the first step of the regression analysis. In the second step of the analysis, classroom walkthrough variables were entered. In the first step, SES significantly predicted student achievement, $R^2 = .16, F(1, 52) = 9.66, p = .003$. The addition of walkthrough variables in step 2 resulted in a significant portion of additional variance explained ($\Delta R^2 = .18, \Delta F(4, 48) = 3.20, p = .02$). An examination of b weights in the final model revealed that principals who report placing more importance on community and family relations than on walkthroughs had greater gains in math scores ($b = -5.80, t = -3.33, p = .002$). Results are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Hierarchical Regression of Principals' Perceptions of the Practice of Classroom Walkthroughs Relative to other Administrative Duties and Student Achievement (Controlling for SES)

Step 1		Student Achievement			
		R ² = .16, F (1, 52) = 9.66, p = .003			
	b	t	p	pr ²	sr ²
Y intercept	4.38	2.92	.005		
SES	.08	3.11	.003	0.16	0.16
Step 2		Student Achievement			
		ΔR ² = .18, ΔF (4, 48) = 3.20, p = .02 Overall R ² = .33, p=F(5, 48) = 4.82, p = .002			
	b	t	p	pr ²	sr ²
Y intercept	7.58	1.68	.10		
SES	.07	2.60	.01	0.12	0.09
Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Leadership Duties	2.55	1.28	.21	0.03	0.02
Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Prof. Learning Duties	1.13	.60	.55	0.007	0.005
Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Assessment Duties	1.42	.70	.49	0.01	0.007
Importance of Walkthrough Relative to Student, Family and Community Relation Duties	-5.80	-3.33	.002	0.19	0.15

Simple correlations were computed to address Hypothesis 4, concerning the relationship between classroom walkthrough design subdomains (walkthrough planning, walkthrough observation and post-walkthrough practices) and SES, and are presented in Table 17. There were no significant correlations; thus, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis, which asserted that there would be no relationship between principals' perceptions of the importance of the classroom walkthrough design and SES.

Table 17

Correlation Matrix of Relations between Classroom Walkthrough Design and SES

	Walkthrough Planning	Walkthrough Observation	Post Walkthrough Practices
SES	.14	.01	.07

In order to address Hypothesis 5, concerning the relationship between classroom walkthrough design variables (walkthrough planning, walkthrough observations, and post walkthrough practices) and AYP, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted with SES entered on the first step and classroom walkthrough design variables added in the second step. Results of the regression analysis revealed that SES significantly predicted AYP, $R^2 = .14$, $F(1, 50) = 7.20$, $p = .05$. However, the addition of the predictor variables in step 2 did not add anything to the prediction of AYP. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis, which asserted that there would be no relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of specific classroom walkthrough design elements and AYP. Results are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Hierarchical Regression of Principals' Perceptions of the Importance of the Classroom Walkthrough Design and AYP (Controlling for SES)

Step 1	AYP $R^2 = .14$, $F(1, 50) = 7.20$, $p = .005$				
	b	t	p	β^2	β^2
Y intercept	.88	5.47	.000		
SES	.008	2.90	.005	0.10	0.10
Step 2	AYP $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $\Delta F(3, 47) = .53$, $p = .67$ Overall $R^2 = .17$, $F(4, 47) = 2.44$, $p = .06$				

Table 18 (continued).

	b	t	p	pr ²	sr ²
Y intercept	.27	.27	.79		
SES	.008	2.79	.008	0.14	0.12
Importance of Walkthrough Planning	-.12	-.60	.55	0.008	0.006
Importance of Walkthrough Observation	.15	.87	.39	0.02	0.01
Importance of Post Walkthrough Practices	.12	.42	.68	0.004	0.003

In order to address Hypothesis 6, regarding the relationship between classroom walkthrough design subdomains (walkthrough planning, walkthrough observations, and post-walkthrough practices) and student achievement, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted. SES was entered on the first step of the regression analysis. In the second step subdomain scores were added. Results of the regression analysis revealed that SES significantly predicted student achievement, $R^2 = .13$, $F(1, 50) = 7.20$, $p = .01$. However, the addition of the predictor variables in step 2 did not add anything to the proportion of variance explained in that criterion. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis, which asserted that there would be no relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of specific classroom walkthrough design elements and the growth in student achievement. Results are presented in Table 19.

Table 19

Hierarchical Regression of Principals' Perceptions of the Importance of the Classroom Walkthrough Design and Student Achievement (Controlling for SES)

Step 1					
	Student Achievement $R^2 = .13$, $F(1, 50) = 7.20, p = .01$				
	b	t	p	β^2	β^2
Y intercept	4.68	3.20	.002		
SES	.07	2.68	.01	0.13	0.13
Step 2					
	Student Achievement $\Delta R^2 .05$, $\Delta F(3, 47) = .94, p = .43$ Overall $R^2 = .12$, $F(4, 47) = 2.50, p = 0.6$				
	b	t	p	β^2	β^2
Y intercept	17.99	2.01	.05		
SES	.08	2.89	.01	0.15	0.15
Importance of Walkthrough Planning	-.45	-.25	.80	0.001	0.001
Importance of Walkthrough Observation	.13	.08	.93	0.0001	0.0001
Importance of Post-walkthrough Practices	-3.08	-1.26	.21	0.03	0.03

Summary

One hundred ninety-five surveys were mailed to a convenience sample of elementary school principals in three large metro-area school districts in the state of Georgia. Sixty-two surveys were returned for a return rate of 32%. Upon receipt of the completed survey instruments, responses were entered into SSPS. SES, AYP and achievement variables were collected from the Georgia Department of Education website as well as the websites of the participating school districts. Reliability for parent domains and subdomains of the instrument were assessed and revealed item-total correlations for this instrument.

Demographic data indicated that the majority of the participants were female (82%). Participants ranged in age from 34 to 64 and had an average of 11 years administrative experience. Seventy-six of the participants held a specialist or doctoral degree. The majority of participants (92%) indicated that they conduct classroom walkthroughs in their school, 58.3% had attended four or more classroom walkthrough classes/workshops and 38.3% had read four or more books/articles about walkthroughs.

School and student demographic data indicated 78.3% of the schools in this study had an AYP status of distinguished. The SES status of the schools in this study ranged from only 3% of students eligible for free and reduced meals to 96%. The average percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the 2010 4th grade CRCT mathematics section was 82.17% ($SD = 12.66$) and the mean was 90.28% ($SD = 9.32$) for the 2011 5th grade CRCT mathematics section. The difference in CRCT math scores from 4th to 5th grade ranged from -2% to 26% change with a mean of 8.23% ($SD = 6.56$).

Pearson correlations and hierarchal multiple regressions were employed to test each of the six hypotheses controlling for AYP or SES. For Hypotheses 2, 3, 5 and 6, the researcher controlled for SES because research has indicated SES to be a strong indicator of student achievement and in this study, SES was significantly correlated to AYP and math score differences (see Table 5). Regression analyses revealed only one significant relationship between walkthrough variables and achievement. Greater increases in math scores from 4th to 5th grade were uniquely related to principals' ratings of walkthroughs as less important than building community and family relations. In Chapter V, implications from the findings will be discussed, as well as recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the extant body of research that addresses the practice of classroom walkthroughs, and to inform practitioners and policy makers of the perceived importance of the practice during this era of increased accountability. This was a quantitative study that utilized survey methodology and archival data to identify the relationships among principals' perceptions of the importance of the practice of classroom walkthrough practices and various markers of school demographics and performance, including eligibility for free or reduced price meals (SES), school ranking (AYP), and student achievement (difference in CRCT math scores). This chapter includes a summary of procedures, discussion of the findings, recommendations for policy and practice and suggestions for future research.

Summary of Procedures

The data for this study were obtained through a 52 question survey instrument designed by the researcher. The instrument gathered information about the principals' demographic profiles, principals' perceptions of the importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs and their experiences with classroom walkthroughs. After permission was received from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Southern Mississippi (Appendix B) and from the participating school districts, 195 survey instruments were mailed to elementary school (kindergarten-fifth grade) and intermediate school (third-fifth grade) principals. Participants had four weeks to complete and return the survey to the researcher. Survey instruments were returned by 62 elementary school principals and the data from the surveys were entered into SSPS for

analysis. Data were also obtained from the Georgia Department of Education School Report Card and from the web sites of the participating school districts. Before statistical tests were performed, the Cronbach's Alpha test for consistency and reliability was conducted for each of the domains, subdomains and the survey instrument as a whole. Additionally, an item-total correlation was completed to further assess the reliability of the instrument. As a result of these tests of reliability, one survey item was eliminated from final analyses. The data collected were then analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Pearson product-moment correlation and hierarchal multiple regression.

Major Findings

Participants in this study ranged in age from 34 to 64 ($M = 50.73$, $SD = 8.11$) and the majority were female (81.7%). The average number of years participants had been the principal in their current school was 3.77 years ($SD = 4.83$). Participants had an average of 11.07 years ($SD = 4.91$) total administrative experience and the average years experience as an educator was 24.6 years ($SD = 5.60$). Forty-five percent of the participants held a specialist degree and 31% held a doctorate degree.

School and demographic data indicated that the mean percentage of students eligible for free or reduced priced meals (SES) was 46.7% with a range from 3% to 96%. Only one school in the study had an AYP status of needs improvement. The average percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the 2010 4th grade CRCT mathematics section was 82.17% ($SD = 12.66$) and the mean was 90.28% ($SD = 9.32$) for the 2011 5th grade CRCT mathematics section. The difference in CRCT math scores from 4th to 5th grade ranged from -2% to 26% change. Seventy-eight percent of schools in this study had an AYP status of distinguished.

Data collected on the participants' familiarity and experience with the practice of classroom walkthroughs indicated that 91.7% of participants conduct classroom walkthroughs in their schools, while only 55% reported that the practice is mandated in their district. Interestingly, the responses to the survey item that asked if the practice was mandated by the participants' district was answered differently among participants in the same district. Due to the large size of the school districts in the study, wording the questions to ask about school clusters, or local school expectations could have improved the prospect of collecting more accurate data. In a comparison of responses from principals at low performing schools and those in high performing schools, it was found that 88.8% of principals in schools with an AYP ranking of does not meet or needs improvement reported that walkthroughs were mandated, while only 46.8% of principals in high SES schools reported the practice to be mandated.

Data collected on the participants' perceptions of the importance of classroom walkthroughs indicated that principals perceived all walkthrough parent domains and subdomains to be in the moderately important or important range. The highest rated parent domain was that of the importance of walkthroughs in completing administrative duties. The parent domain of the importance of the walkthrough design, had the second highest rating, and the parent domain of the importance of walkthroughs relative to other duties had the lowest rating

Hypothesis 1 was stated as follows: There will be no relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other duties and the SES status of the school. No significant relationships were found among these variables; therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The

results for the hypothesis suggest that principals in both high and low SES schools similarly view the importance of the practice of conducting classroom walkthroughs. In schools with 85% or more students eligible for free or reduced price meals, the mean score for level of importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other duties was 3.84 ($N = 10$) and in schools with less than 10% of their student population eligible for free or reduced price meals, the mean score was 3.58 ($N = 7$) both in the moderately important range. While the means for these two groups were not in the important or very important range, they indicate that walkthroughs are thought to be a relatively important practice in schools today. The findings are inconsistent with those reported by Leiter (2004) who found that principals in high SES schools were more likely to manage instruction, as opposed to lead change toward a vision, and were more collaborative than principals in low SES schools. Mendez-Morse (1991) reported that principals in low SES schools are more likely to be managers who oversee the operations of the school than to be instructional leaders.

Hypothesis 2 was stated as follows: There will be no relationship between principals' perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other administrative duties and the academic performance level of the school. No significant relationship was found; therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. In parallel to hypothesis one, the results indicated that regardless of the academic challenges faced by a principal, the view of the importance of classroom walkthroughs remained the same. In schools with a distinguished AYP rating, the average score by principals on the importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other duties was 3.83 ($N = 47$), which is in the moderately important range. In schools

with an AYP rating of does not meet or needs improvement the average score for the importance of walkthroughs relative to other duties was 3.30 (N = 9), also in the moderately important range. These results are consistent with studies that found walkthroughs to be a useful tool in school improvement. Gray and Streshly (2008), in a review of what moves schools from good to great, stated that, “classroom visits were an important way of ensuring that teachers continued to focus on improving student performance” (p. 110).

Hypothesis 3 was stated as follows: There will be no relationship between principals’ perceptions regarding the importance of classroom walkthroughs relative to other administrative duties and the growth in student achievement. A significant relationship was identified between the subdomain of student, family and community relations and the difference in math scores on the CRCT such that principals who report placing more importance on student, family and community relations than on walkthroughs had greater gains in math scores. The researcher thus rejected the null hypothesis. The level of importance study participants placed on community relations is supported by many studies that have linked parents’ involvement in their child’s education to academic performance. A study conducted by Gaziel (1995) on the work patterns of principals in high achieving schools found that principals in these schools spent 66% more of their time building community relations than principals in schools considered average. A study conducted by Scheurich (1998) found that leaders in successful schools share the following belief:

“The school exists for and serves the community- there is little separation. These schools see parents and themselves as collaborators in the education for the

children, and so the schools do everything they can to positively promote this collaboration. No matter what the education or income level of the parents, the school staff treats all of the parents with respect, appreciation, warmth, sensitivity, and care” (p. 467).

Additionally, Martin (2009) found in a dissertation study that leadership practices, which included outreach programs and operations, engagement, community building, and support service, had a statistically significant influence on student success.

Hypothesis 4 was stated as follows: There will be no relationships among principals’ perceptions regarding the importance of specific classroom walkthrough design elements and SES status of the school. No significant relationships were identified; therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The mean scores for the subdomains of conducting walkthrough observations ($M = 4.47$) and post walkthrough practices ($M = 4.24$) fell in the important range, while the mean score for the subdomain of classroom walkthrough planning fell in the moderately important range. Similar to Hypothesis 1, these results signify that regardless of a school’s socio-economic status, principals perceived the elements of the classroom walkthrough design to be important. These subdomains included elements such as who participates in the classroom walkthroughs, what observers look for during walkthroughs and what type of feedback is given to teachers after walkthroughs. The perceptions of the study participants are similar to those expressed by Bloom (2007) in his statement that, “It is essential that before a school or district begins a classroom visitation program, everybody is clear about what to expect and what his or her role is to be in the process” (p. 41). Richardson (2001) explains that it is extremely important for everyone involved in the

classroom walkthrough process to have a clear understanding of what is expected and what will occur. It is also important that expectations for classroom instruction and student achievement data drive a positive change in instructional practices.

Hypothesis 5 was stated as follows: There will be no relationships among principals' perceptions regarding the importance of specific classroom walkthrough design elements and the academic performance level of the school. No significant relationships were found; therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The study results revealed that in schools with a distinguished AYP rating, the average score by principals on the importance of the classroom walkthrough design was 4.18 ($N = 46$), which is in the important range. In schools with an AYP rating of does not meet or needs improvement ($N = 8$) the average score for the importance of the walkthrough design was 4.27, also in the important range. These results indicate that regardless of a school's performance level, principals see value in the classroom walkthrough design. The perceptions of the study participants are similar to those in the Hall and Hord (2000) study, which found that the post walkthrough practice of providing teachers one-on-one focused feedback is a powerful staff development approach. The perceptions of the study participants are also reinforced by Kachur et al. (2010), who explain the importance of not only establishing a well defined purpose for classroom walkthroughs, but also specifying specific look-fors or walkthrough focus.

Hypothesis 6 was stated as follows: There will be no relationships among principals' perceptions regarding the importance of specific classroom walkthrough design elements and the growth in student achievement. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. While no significant relationships were found between walkthrough

design and achievement, participants did indicate that the classroom walkthrough design is important. The mean score for the walkthrough design domain was 4.22 ($N = 58$) which is in the important range. The perceptions of the study participants were similar to those in a study conducted by Dexter (2005) to examine principals' perception of the Learning 24/7 Classroom Walkthrough with Reflective Feedback Model in improving student achievement; he found that principals believed that the model could make a significant difference in achievement and instruction and felt they would need additional training with opportunities to practice the model.

Discussion

The participants in this study varied in age from 34 to 64 years old and had an average of 24.6 years experience as an educator which is slightly more than the state average of 20.0 years. Eighty-one percent of the study participants were female, a proportion that is higher than the state average of 67%. Nearly half (45%) of the principals who participated in the study had a specialist or doctorate degree which is somewhat lower than the state average of 66.5%. The schools in the study had an average of 46.7% of students eligible for free or reduced priced meals and varied greatly from 3% to 96%. The sample's average was a little lower than the state average of 56% of students eligible for free or reduced price meals. Eighty-two percent of the schools in the sample met AYP in 2011 which is higher than the state average of 77%.

Major findings from this study are consistent with previous research. The perceptions of the participants in this study that walkthroughs are important in completing administrative duties, including monitoring instructional practices and student learning, are consistent with those in Keruskin's 2005 study of the perceptions of high

school principals who utilized The Walkthrough Tool of the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania. It was found that principals believed that classroom walkthroughs improved classroom instruction and student achievement. An additional study conducted by Rossi (2007) on the use of The Walkthrough Tool of the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania found that principals perceived classroom walkthroughs to be a positive influence on instruction and student achievement. Further, in a study conducted by Merrill (2008), principals and assistant principals across the state of Illinois were surveyed to examine their attitudes toward the practice of classroom walkthroughs. Seventy-five percent of the administrators surveyed reported that they conducted brief (five minutes or less) walkthroughs in their schools. Fifty percent of the participants reported visiting every classroom in their school at least every two weeks. The study concluded that the participants perceived classroom walkthroughs to be effective in improving teacher-administrator relationships, familiarizing the principals with curricular decisions being made in the classroom, promoting professional development and improving student achievement.

This study identified a significant relationship between the importance that principals place on building student, family and school relationships and student achievement. These findings are consistent with previous research that indicates that principals who value community involvement and work to increase the involvement of parents in their students' education are more effective. One such research study by Bartell (1990) found that when outstanding principals of the year described their instructional leadership practices, the outstanding principals solicited input from parents and community members in decision making on a regular basis.

Data collected on alignment of classroom walkthroughs revealed that 70% of participants reported that their classroom walkthrough practices were mostly or completely aligned to their school improvement plan, 68.4% reported that classroom walkthrough practices were mostly or completely aligned to their professional development and 61.7 % reported that classroom walkthroughs were mostly or completely aligned to their teacher evaluation instrument. These findings are consistent with Marzano's opinions about successful walkthrough practices presented in Chapter II. Marzano (2010) explains that for walkthroughs to be most effective they should align with the teacher evaluation instrument and both should align with professional development. He further asserts that in order to successfully improve instruction, districts and states should start with a common instructional model, and then align walkthroughs, teacher evaluations, and professional development with the common instructional model. One of the areas mentioned by Marzano was addressed with a survey item that inquired about the importance of classroom walkthroughs in monitoring the impact of professional learning. This survey item had a mean of 4.0, indicating that participants thought walkthroughs were an important factor in completing this administrative duty. The responses of the participants were similar to the findings of Mandell (2006), who conducted an investigation of the effects of supervision on professional development and found that the classroom walkthrough model was the most effective way to help teachers focus on improving their instructional skills.

In addition to data collected for the purpose of testing the hypotheses, additional data were collected from participants in the present study regarding their perceptions of the importance of classroom walkthroughs in completing administrative duties. The

purpose of the data was to gain an understanding of how walkthroughs are intertwined with a principal's duties and how they assist in the completion of those duties. When asked to rate the importance of walkthroughs in completing administrative duties, 76.1% of study participants reported that walkthroughs were very important in maintaining the visible and sustained role of instructional leader. Sixty-two percent of participants rated walkthroughs as very important in the tasks of monitoring the implementation of standards-based instruction and in emphasizing the value of student engagement in the learning process.

The findings in this study that indicated that principals perceived walkthroughs as important in completing other administrative duties were similar to the findings of other studies. A meta-analysis of the effects of leadership on student achievement (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005) noted 21 leadership duties that related significantly to student achievement. Of the 21 duties, 5 specifically related to the practice of conducting classroom walkthroughs (pp. 42-43, 61): a) communication with students and teachers, b) intellectual stimulation- awareness among faculty and staff of most current theories and practice, c) monitoring/evaluating the effect of school practice on student achievement, d) awareness of school undercurrents, and e) high visibility. The findings of this study are also similar to those of a study conducted by Cotton (2003) in her review of the literature since 1985, which identified twenty-six principal actions that have a positive effect on student achievement. Of the 21 actions, she identified 4 that were addressed through the practice of conducting classroom walkthroughs (pp. 68, 70): a) visibility and accessibility, b) collaboration, c) instructional leadership, and d) classroom observation and feedback to teachers.

In summary, the sample demographics were somewhat similar to the demographics of educators and schools in the state of Georgia. Similar to the state, the majority of participants were female and the sample participants averaged only slightly more years of experience. The average socio-economic status of the schools in the study was slightly higher than the state average as was the AYP status. The study identified a significant relationship among the level of importance principals place on the practice of classroom walkthroughs relative to administrative duties and building school and community relations such that the lower they rated walkthroughs in comparison to building relationships, the greater the gains in student achievement. The findings of this study were consistent with previous studies of perceptions on the topic.

Limitations

Generalizability of the study findings is limited by certain factors. Of the 195 survey instruments mailed to the sample, only 62 surveys were returned for a return rate of 31.8%. A higher return rate might have presented greater opportunities for significant findings. Further, 35 (56%) of the participants were from the same school district, and 47 (78%) of the participating schools had an AYP status of distinguished, thus limiting the generalizability of this study to school districts with similar student, school and principal demographics.

When the Cronbach's alpha test of coefficient reliability was performed on each domain and subdomain of the survey instrument, two subdomains in the walkthrough design section were below the 0.7 level. The subdomains of classroom walkthrough planning had a Cronbach's alpha of .31, and the subdomain of post walkthrough practices had a Cronbach's alpha of .50. Therefore, these measures could have lower reliability.

This study did not measure the level of implementation of classroom walkthroughs or how effectively the practice of classroom walkthroughs was implemented by participants. Therefore, this study is limited in its capacity to support recommendations regarding specific classroom walkthrough practices in order to have significant effect on school performance levels and student achievement.

The data collected were for student cohorts; therefore, the results of the fifth grade CRCT scores were based on different learning standards than the fourth grade CRCT scores, and likely did not contain scores from exactly the same students, especially in schools with a high transiency rate. Additionally, survey instruments were mailed to and completed by the sample participants during the months of July and August. The fact that these months are typically times when principals take vacations and/or receive a change in assignment resulting in a move to a different school could have hindered the survey instrument return rate.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Based on the findings of this study and a review of the literature, the researcher would like to make several recommendations to school district leaders, principals and teachers regarding the practice of classroom walkthroughs. In light of the lack of connection of the practice of classroom walkthroughs to student achievement, districts should critically examine the fidelity of the implementation of classroom walkthrough protocols. Such analysis should contribute to a district's decision to continue, drop or refine classroom walkthrough practices.

The practice of classroom walkthroughs has been identified in this study and in other studies as an important tool among many used in the quest for school improvement.

However, there is little research that finds the practice of walkthroughs in isolation to be an effective means of improving student achievement. Where evidence of impact on student achievement exists, the researcher recommends that school districts continue implementing the practice of classroom walkthroughs in their schools in conjunction with building and sustaining a shared vision, data-driven decision making, cultivating professional learning communities, encouraging collaboration, and building relationships with the community, families and students. The results of the hypothesis testing in the present study offer limited support for this recommendation. However, the importance that study participants attach to classroom walkthroughs, plus the fact that this practice is recommended by previous studies of effective administrative practice (Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2008), may warrant consideration by policymakers and practitioners, but implementation should occur in tandem with evaluation through empirical examination.

This study revealed discrepancies in reported expectations, and implementation among principals from the same district. For this reason, the researcher recommends that school districts communicate clear expectation in the purpose, design, and implementation of classroom walkthroughs. Districts should also conduct training to ensure effective implementation of classroom walkthroughs. Principals and other school staff conducting classroom walkthroughs should be trained to identify student engagement, alignment of instruction to state standards, and level of student thinking, and how to support teachers in providing quality instruction for their students.

Studies have shown that walkthroughs are an effective way to monitor the implementation and effects of professional development. This is similar to the results of the current study, which found that principals perceive classroom walkthroughs as

important ($M = 4.07$) in completing administrative duties related to professional learning. The researcher recommends that principals utilize walkthroughs as a tool to observe evidence that the professional development they are providing is having a positive impact on classroom instruction. The researcher also recommends that principals involve assistant principals and other school leaders in the practice of classroom walkthroughs to develop instructional leadership in others and to build a professional learning community. Principals should utilize walkthroughs as opportunities to have reflective conversations with teachers about instructional practices and for identifying professional development needs.

Lastly, the researcher recommends that school leaders and policy makers seek opportunities to build relationships with students, families and the community, as this study found a significant relationship between student achievement and the perception of principals that this practice is more important than conducting walkthroughs. These findings are similar to previous research on community and family involvement (Gaziel, 1995; Scheurich, 1998; Martin, 2009).

Recommendations for Future Research

Further studies may help identify relationships between the practice of classroom walkthroughs and student achievement. Studies that examine the use of classroom walkthroughs in combination with other leadership strategies may contribute to the extant body of research on the practices of effective principals. Additionally, looking at the role classroom walkthroughs play in monitoring and increasing teacher effectiveness is relevant due to the requirements of the Race to the Top federal initiative. The following recommendations are made for future research:

1. An examination of the importance of walkthroughs in relation to student achievement with a much larger sample size as well as pre- and post-tests that are conducted with the exact same sample of students, thus increasing generalizability of the findings.
2. An examination of the implementation of a specific walkthrough model, as opposed to the practice of classroom walkthroughs in general, and the impact on student achievement.
3. An examination of the extent to which teachers utilize classroom walkthrough feedback and the impact on student achievement.
4. An examination of whether or not recommendations made as a result of walkthrough observations impact student achievement and align with the teacher evaluation instrument.
5. An examination of the role of classroom walkthroughs in conjunction with the practice of peer coaching as a means to improve teacher effectiveness.
6. An examination of the role of classroom walkthroughs in conjunction with professional learning communities as a means to improve classroom instructional practices.
7. An examination of specific walkthrough practices used to impact instruction in a sample of schools with more representative patterns of performance than the present sample.

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the level of importance that principals place on the overall practice of classroom walkthroughs and on specific

elements of classroom walkthroughs. It was additionally designed to explore the relationships among perceptions about classroom walkthroughs and student achievement, school performance levels, and socio-economic status of the school. Studies have identified this practice as an effective tool for instructional leadership.

The data gathered for this study were obtained through a 52 question survey instrument designed by the researcher that gathered information about the principals' demographics, principals' perceptions of the importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs and their experiences with classroom walkthroughs. Archival data were also collected from the Georgia Department of Education website and the webs sites of the participating school districts. Descriptive statistics, Pearson product correlations and hierarchal multiple regressions were used to determine whether there were significant relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

The major findings of this study show that principals perceive the practice of classroom walkthroughs to be important. However, no significant relationships were revealed between the importance principals place on the walkthrough design and SES, AYP or student achievement. A significant relationship was identified between the importance principals place on the practice of classroom walkthroughs relative to the duty of building student, family and community relations and student achievement. The study revealed that principals who report placing more importance on student, family and community relations than on walkthroughs had greater gains in math scores on the Georgia CRCT. There were no statistically significant relationships identified between the importance principals place on the practice of classroom walkthroughs and socio-economic status (SES) or school performance (AYP).

Recommendations were made for policy and practice based on results of the study and a review of related literature. These included that districts should critically examine the fidelity of classroom walkthrough practices due to the lack of connection of the practice to student achievement. It is recommended that districts provide clear expectations for the purpose and implementation of classroom walkthroughs. Training should be provided for school leaders to ensure the effective implementation of walkthroughs. Principals should utilize walkthroughs as a tool to monitor the effectiveness of professional development and identify future professional learning needs. Lastly, principals should use walkthroughs to initiate reflective conversations with teachers about instructional practices.

Recommendations were made for future research studies that examine the relation of specific classroom walkthrough models and student achievement. The researcher also recommended a study that examines teachers' use of walkthrough feedback and student achievement. A study was recommended that examines whether or not recommendations made as a result of walkthrough observations result in student achievement and align with the teacher evaluation instrument. Lastly, the researcher recommended a study that uses a sample that has more representative patterns than the current sample.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT
PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF
CLASSROOM WALKTHROUGHS

Classroom walkthroughs can be defined as short, informal observations of classroom teachers and students conducted by administrators, coaches, mentors, peers, and others, followed by feedback, conversation, and/or action (Kachur, 2010). Please answer the following survey questions regarding the practice of classroom walkthroughs.

A. Please provide the following demographic information:

1. School _____

2. District _____

3. How many years have you been the principal at this school? (**not** including upcoming '11-'12 school year.) _____

4. How many years of administrative experience do you have? _____

5. How many total years have you been an educator? _____

6. How many years were you a classroom teacher? _____

7. What is your age? _____

8. What is your highest level of education?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Bachelors | Masters | Specialist | Doctorate |

9. What is your gender?

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Female | <input type="radio"/> Male |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|

10. Is the practice of conducting classroom walkthroughs mandated in your school district?

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|

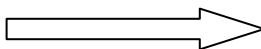
11. Which best describes your professional reading about classroom walkthroughs?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| none | 1-2 articles and/or books | 3-4 articles and/or books | more than 4 articles and/or books |

12. Which best describes your professional training in the practice of classroom walkthroughs?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| none | 1-2 classes/workshops | 3-4 classes/workshops | more than 4 classes/workshops |

THE SURVEY CONTINUES ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE



13. Are walkthroughs conducted at your school? (If no, please skip to Part B on the next page).

- Yes No

14. Who conducts walkthroughs at your school? Choose all that apply.

- Principal Assistant Principal Teachers Counselors Academic Coaches/Specialists

15. On average how many **total** classroom walkthroughs do you conduct throughout the school year?

- Less than 50 50-100 100-150 150-200 More than 200

16. Please answer the following questions about the walkthrough model used at your school:

a. To what degree is the walkthrough model aligned to your school improvement plan?

- Not Aligned Somewhat Aligned Mostly Aligned Completely Aligned

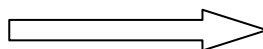
b. To what degree is the walkthrough model aligned to the professional development provided to teachers?

- Not Aligned Somewhat Aligned Mostly Aligned Completely Aligned

c. To what degree is the walkthrough model aligned to elements in the summative teacher evaluation?

- Not Aligned Somewhat Aligned Mostly Aligned Completely Aligned

THE SURVEY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE



B. Please indicate your response for each question below using the following scale:

1 unimportant	2 of little importance	3 moderately important	4 important	5 very important
------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	----------------	---------------------

How important is the practice of classroom walkthroughs in:

1. Monitoring the implementation of standards-based instruction

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Monitoring the use of differentiated instruction

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Monitoring the use of higher-order thinking skills in instruction

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Monitoring the implementation of the school improvement plan and its impact upon student achievement

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Maintaining a safe, orderly and inviting learning community

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Emphasizing the value of student engagement in the learning process

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Monitoring the impact of professional learning on school improvement goals

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Collecting and analyzing relevant student and teacher data to monitor and revise school and classroom improvement strategies

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Monitoring the impact of professional learning on student achievement

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Maintaining a visible and sustained role of instructional leader

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

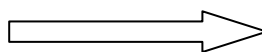
11. Providing supervision for curriculum, assessment and instruction

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Ensuring that the school improvement plan is fully operational and reinforces a sustained process of continuous improvement

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

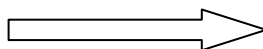
THE SURVEY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE



C. Please rate the importance of the following elements of classroom walkthroughs using the following scale:

	1	2	3	4	5
	unimportant	of little importance	moderately important	important	very important
1. The length of time spent in classrooms during walkthroughs	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Administrators conducting classroom walkthroughs	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Teachers conducting classroom walkthroughs	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The frequency of classroom walkthroughs throughout the school year	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Type of feedback provided to teachers (example: oral, written, percentages or graphs)	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. The timeliness in which walkthrough feedback is provided	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Providing walkthrough feedback to individual teachers	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Providing walkthrough feedback to grade level teams	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Providing walkthrough feedback to whole staff	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Monitoring student engagement	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Monitoring alignment of instruction to the state standards	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Assessing the students' understanding of the learning objectives	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Monitoring the use of differentiated instruction	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

THE SURVEY CONTINUES ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE



D. How important is the practice of conducting classroom walkthroughs in comparison to completing other required administrative duties. Please indicate your response using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
unimportant	of little importance	moderately important	important	very important

Ex: The practice of conducting classroom walkthroughs is _____ compared to the administrative duty of ensuring parents and community members feel welcomed in your school.

1. Ensuring parents and community members feel welcomed in your school

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Maintaining consistent communication between school, parent and community members

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Encouraging student, family and community involvement

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Conducting teacher evaluations

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Hiring and retaining quality teachers

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Maintaining a collegial working environment

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Facilitating remediation for marginal teachers

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Planning high-quality professional learning

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Creating and maintaining a collaborative learning community

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Analyzing student performance data

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Designing student interventions based on data analysis

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Using student performance data to adjust instruction

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
 Tel: 601.266.6820
 Fax: 601.266.5509
 www.usm.edu/irb

**HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
 NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **11032104**

PROJECT TITLE: **Principals' Perceived Importance of Classroom Walkthroughs**

PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: **03/10/2011 to 12/01/2011**

PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **Shannon Anne McGill**

COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**

DEPARTMENT: **Educational Leadership & School Counseling**

FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**

HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **04/04/2011 to 04/03/2012**

Lawrence A. Hosman

 Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
 HSPRC Chair

4-5-2011

 Date

APPENDIX C
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY
PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF
CLASSROOM WALKTHROUGHS

Research will be conducted by: Shannon McGill
Email Address: shannon.mcgill@cobbk12.org
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Mike Ward
University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
601-266-6820

June 6, 2011

Dear Elementary School Principal,

You are invited to participate in this survey on principals' perceived importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs. It should take **less than 15 minutes** of your time to complete. This survey is being administered to identify relationships among principals' perceived importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs, principals' perceived importance of specific classroom walkthrough elements as well as the relative importance of classroom walkthroughs in relation to other administrative duties; it will further explore the relationships among perceptions about classroom walkthroughs and student achievement, school performance levels, and the socio-economic status of the school. The benefit to participants in this study is the contribution of findings that address the relationship between the practice of classroom walkthroughs and student achievement. A written summary will be provided to the district and to participants upon request. Participants should request a summary from shannon.mcgill@cobbk12.org.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusing to participate or for the discontinuation of participation in the study. If you choose to participate, all of your responses will be kept confidential and will not be shared with participating schools, districts or with the University of Southern Mississippi personnel except as summary information. The names of individuals, schools and districts will be not identified in any reports. School and district names are requested on the survey instrument so that correlations can be made between the principals' perception of the importance of the practice of classroom walkthroughs and school academic and demographic data, however will be clipped from the survey instrument once data is collected. No access to student records will be required at participating schools. All school academic and demographic data will be collected from the publically accessible Georgia Department of Education School Report Card. There are no reasonably foreseeable risks to participants in this study.

Please complete the survey questions to the best of your ability. Once you have completed the survey and signed this letter of consent, place them in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided and mail it back to the researcher. If you have any questions, please contact Shannon McGill at shannon.mcgill@cobbk12.org.

Participants wishing to review a copy of the study proposal and survey instrument before consenting to participation may request this information from the researcher at shannon.mcgill@cobbk12.org. This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, 601-266-6820.

Participant's Name (please print)

Participant's Signature

Date

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